

# KEEPERS OF THE FAITH



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**COLIN D. STANDISH &  
RUSSELL R. STANDISH**

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# So Who's to Benefit from Keepers of the Faith?

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As every wind of doctrines is marshalled against the church, more determined efforts are required to alert and warn of the dangers and errors that are now epidemic in most congregations. In *Keepers of the Faith*, Colin and Russell Standish have attempted to achieve three critical goals:

- to identify many of these errors
- to clearly explain the nature of these errors
- to show the clear truth as revealed by Inspiration.

The book is especially directed to gospel ministers and lay leaders in the church. The title reflects the grave responsibility of every chosen leader, both ministerial and lay, to uphold "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." The book, however, has now found a wide circulation among the rank-and-file laity who have discovered it to be one of the clearest presentations of Bible principles of truth and righteousness. It would be hard to imagine any committed Christian not being greatly benefitted by this book.

**\$7.95**

# KEEPERS OF THE FAITH

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# DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to two men who may truly be described as keepers of the faith. At a time of great crisis within God's church they stood up and were counted on the side of truth.

These two men, as shepherds of God's flock, spearheaded the call for revival and reformation in the Seventh-day Adventist Church during the early and middle seventies. Their presentation of the biblical principles of righteousness by faith enlightened many and enraged others. Had they received the full support of their fellow leaders and pastors, God might have led His church at that time, triumphantly through to the kingdom of heaven. In deep respect this volume is dedicated to

PASTOR ROBERT PIERSON  
(General Conference president, 1966-1979)

and

PASTOR KENNETH WOOD  
(Editor of *The Adventist Review*, 1966-1982)



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## Chapter 1

# THE MINISTERIAL DILEMMA

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**T**he following scenario is not based upon one specific experience, but underscores the dilemma of the young minister in the work of God today. A young man, newly converted to the Adventist faith, like so many desire training for the ministry. He is on fire for the great message that pulsates within his being. Thus he dedicates his life to the gospel ministry. He quickly enrolls in the theological department of a Seventh-day Adventist college with great enthusiasm. Like so many new Seventh-day Adventists he has studied widely the Advent message and as a result is more informed than many who have been decades in the faith. With great enthusiasm he approaches his Bible classes, only to find that some of his teachers no longer share his belief in the authenticity of the Advent message. These teachers, having been students in the theological seminaries of the world, have dared to bring their aberrant beliefs into the institution where they are employed and are now being used of Satan to indoctrinate the upcoming generation of ministers in a "faith" which is defective. Years of teaching experience have honed the professor's arguments, and many within the class are as lambs to the slaughter before the persuasive arguments of a much more experienced professor. Further, most students are prone to accept the word of the man who holds their academic grades in his hands.

In some classes the professor uses the unsettling technique of raising doubt concerning the veracity of some portions of Scripture. He does not offer a solution to the apparent Bible problems, but rather leaves the student with the distinct impression that no such answer is available and that in some areas Scripture is less than reliable.

This young man is not deceived. He understands the errors of his professor. After his initial shock, he seeks in a careful way to point out that the teacher is presenting beliefs that are not in harmony with the Adventist Faith as found in Scripture. At first his objections in class are handled kindly by the professor. However soon the professor becomes agitated by these interruptions and challenges to the integrity of that which he is teaching. Even many students in the class share the professor's concern because they do not have the background of this young man, and feel that he is a negative influence upon the class.

Eventually the professor calls the young man into his office to give him some "wise counsel." The professor tells him, "You are a promising student who can do a great work for God, but remember you have come to college to learn and to understand from those of much wider experience and background." The young man, while respectful, tries to explain his position to the professor. The professor plays upon his youth and inexperience in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The professor further implies that the evangelist who baptized the young man is not really a scholar. The young man is now more careful in class. Often he says nothing when he is deeply disturbed by the questionable teachings of his professor. He does, however, often raise these issues with his fellow students, most of whom prove to be unsympathetic to his viewpoint.

The teacher senses that the young man is still an "agitator" within the class and once again the young man is counseled. With integrity the young man tries to put forward the principles of Truth in his term paper, and in his written examinations, only

to receive poor, if not failing, grades from his professor. He now faces a crisis and a dilemma. He is convinced that he is called to the ministry, yet he realizes that the achievement of his ambition is largely in the hands of his professors. They not only teach him, they will also grade him and be the ones primarily responsible for making recommendations to the employing conferences.

Eventually and reluctantly the young man comes to the conviction that he must remain silent within the class. However, he vows that as soon as he has graduated and has been appointed to ministerial work he will preach the Truth unadulterated and unhampered by human thought. He graduates and is appointed to an internship. But now he finds himself interning with a minister who is less than clear upon the distinctive Truth of God's Word. However, with courage he begins to preach the Adventist faith, to encourage the members with the power of Christ to give them victory over sin. Within the congregation there are those who for many years have not heard such straight preaching and they raise their concerns with the senior minister. The minister himself, not clear on the Adventist message, sees it as his responsibility to dialogue with his young intern. The counsel is mixed with flattery. The intern is told that he has a very promising future in the ministry, but he must learn that the preaching of certain sermons is unwise. His sermons are causing disunity in the church and already a number have spoken to the senior minister concerning this matter. It is not that those members do not value this young man, he is assured, but they are afraid that his preaching will bring controversy and instability into the church which has been known for many years as a bastion of stability. Once again the young man is faced with a dilemma and reluctantly he decides that he will tone down his sermons while awaiting appointment to his own church.

Eventually that opportunity comes and again with vigor the young pastor launches into a presentation of the great Truths of

Adventism. But again there are those in the church who are neither in harmony with, nor ready to receive, the straight testing Truths that this young man presents. Influential men within the church approach the conference president complaining about the preaching of the young man. In a meeting with the president he is told that shortly the conference will be considering the possibility of his ordination. The president assures him that he is considered to be a promising young man with a bright future in the ministry, but he must learn to preach in a way that will maintain unity and peace within the church. The president explains that members of the church who are held in high regard, men of experience and of respect within the conference, have been concerned with the messages that he has been delivering from the pulpit. The conference president urges him to be careful with the subject matter of his preaching.

By now the intern is married and his wife adds to his anguish. Ambitious for him, she urges him to do nothing that will jeopardize his ordination or future in the ministry. He is torn between loyalty to truth and an earnest concern for the souls of his church members on the one hand, and his future in the ministry on the other. He begins to rationalize that if he is dropped from the ministry he will lose all influence.

In confusion and frustration the young minister decides to wait until after his ordination to present the message with power, but

already he has compromised his preaching many times and salved his conscience. No longer does he have the same burden to preach with power. He has step by step been led into a political environment in which the favor of the congregation becomes one of the most critical determinants of his future success. Indeed, he flatters himself that he has now learned how to present the message in a winning and appealing way. He realizes that there is much worldliness and secularism among his church members, but he deludes himself that if he preaches the love of

Christ, independent of some of the deeper calls for repentance, that the members will eventually turn from their worldliness to the pathway of Christ.

Eventually he is given bigger churches and wider responsibilities until one day he too is voted to the post of conference presidency. And by this time he gives much the same counsel that he himself received as a young man. He even points out his own inadvertent rashness as a youth and explains how "wise" leadership had helped him to develop a ministry that was fruitful in his churches.

Sadly to a greater or lesser extent, this story has been repeated over and over again. It is possible that we as ministers have been deceived, greatly deceived, as to the purpose of our calling. We face a crisis in our lives in that we no longer see the need to present the straight testimony of the True Witness to our congregations. Indeed, we mistakenly believe to do so would be contrary to the call of Christ, but such is not the case. The servant of the Lord tells us that in these last days, we, the ministry of God's church, will be called to give a straighter testimony than even that of John the Baptist. We are also told that many will rise up against the messengers as they have in generations past. The situation will be intimidating and will call forth the greatest anguish in our souls. But if it leads us to a deeper relationship with Christ and a fuller leaning upon Him, then indeed He will multiply our ministry and many who would have been lost will be saved in the kingdom of heaven. And after all, it is to such a work that God has called us.

## Chapter 2

# THE MINISTRY

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**W**e grew up with an idealized concept of the ministry, no doubt largely due to the high regard with which our parents held the ministers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It seemed to us that every minister had, as it were, one foot in heaven and the other almost there. It hardly entered our heads that it was possible that there would be any minister not fully committed to God, to the message of the remnant church, or who would not be unquestionably ready for the kingdom of heaven.

It was no doubt partially owing to this connection that, when taking our college years at Avondale College, we turned away from any thought of pursuing the ministerial course. This sacred view of the ministry was heightened by the regular attendance at our local church of ministerial students from Avondale. The quality, dedication and talents of these young men contrasted with our own less than complete commitment to the Lord.

Perhaps the pinnacle of our idealistic view of the ministry came when, almost annually, we had visitors from the General Conference attend our camp meetings. It seemed that somehow they preached like the angel Gabriel as they presented messages relevant to the finishing of God's work. The assurance of the message of God and of the second coming of Christ was thrilling to our boyish ears.

In many ways we wish we could have retained that idealistic view of the ministry. Today, like the laity, the ministry is in deep schism both in Christian practice and in doctrinal understanding.

Indeed, in recent years we have learned of conference presidents on both sides of the Pacific who have had to admonish their workers for carelessness in dress, watching X-rated movies and videos, attending the dance halls, for not paying a faithful tithe and being less than fully committed to their wives. This alarming state of affairs indicates that no longer is there an understanding or indeed a commitment to the ministry by many who have chosen this sacred office. Each year scores of ministers resign from their ministerial calling. Some leave because of disillusionment, some because of doctrinal apostasy, some because they are dismissed by the conference, and tragically many because of immorality and other sins.

We realize the frailty of our own lives and the need of constant strength from above. This book is written not from a "holier than thou" standpoint, but rather from a concern that the "priests of Israel" will be guardians of the truth of God, while also presenting the purity of Christian living before our church members. There has never been a time when it has been more difficult to be a minister of God. Neither has there been a time when there has been a need for a greater dedication to God's entire message and to Christlike living among the ministry. These cannot be achieved without a daily submission of our lives to God and deep study of the principles of present truth.

It has often been said that we cannot raise our members above the level of our own experience. Only as we have our lives committed to Christ and have a burden for the vindication of the character of God and as we have a love for souls can we be entrusted with the highest calling that any man on earth can have. /

## Chapter 3

# THE PROBLEM

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**W**e cannot deny that we have been somewhat influenced by the last book written by Dr. Francis Schaeffer entitled *The Great Evangelical Disaster*. It is not that we agree with his major theological concepts. Indeed, with some of the most fundamental matters which he espoused, we will be taking issue in this book. However, Dr. Schaeffer's great discernment concerning the satanic influences within the churches he represented is a matter that is just as relevant to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

*Keepers of the Faith* is essentially written for fellow pastors and leaders of the remnant church including the lay leadership of the church. But above all its impact is meant to be made upon God's church as a whole. We hasten to affirm that we are convinced that the Seventh-day Adventist church is God's last remnant church; that there is no other church to which Christ is calling His people today. We are convinced that this church will go through to the end. We nevertheless recognize that the form may be greatly different and the membership vastly changed.

Under the great persecution of the little time of trouble, few will be able to work in safety around the world. The vast organizational structure that we have today must surely then be broken into simple units. It is almost certain that our church schools, hospitals and other facilities will no longer be able to be used by God's faithful people. But nonetheless the remnant will be Seventh-day Adventists as there can be no other church. This assertive does not mean that we do not accept the fact that the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be under fierce assaults.



Satan realizes that this church stands between him and his nefarious scheme to derail the finishing of the gospel commission. He realizes that, if he can pervert the truth and the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he can destroy the ministry of Christ in the world. Every evil agency is committed to this task in the sinister hope that somehow, someday, Satan will be able to destroy entirely from the face of the earth all representatives of the kingdom of Christ. But there is infinitely more likelihood that the oceans will dry up than that God's people will fail to fully reflect His character and refrain from sharing the glorious truths of the gospel with every man, woman and child on the earth.

While discouraged and greatly alarmed by the overwhelming influence of worldliness and apostasy within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we are nevertheless encouraged, as we travel and preach around the world, by the great awakening among a growing segment of God's people. We think of no church in which we have shared the gospel of Jesus where there has not been evidence of a core of members who are on fire for the great Advent faith, and who are studying and sharing it in unprecedented ways. Yet we have to acknowledge that some of these faithful ones are facing barriers and even persecution from their fellow church members; sometimes from pastors, who, as Sister White states, are

...inclined to be disorderly and are drifting away from the great landmarks of our faith. (TM 503).

It is our perception that there is a movement of reform and revitalization among our ministry, yet the overwhelming number of ministers are in Laodicean slumber and, indeed, are directly or indirectly responsible for the malaise of the members within their congregations. Over and over again we hear from faithful Adventists the plea "Let us hear, once again, the great messages of the Advent faith in our churches." Colin well remembers a church where he had preached upon the subject of

the investigative judgment. An elderly brother declared, "It's been forty years since I heard a message on the investigative judgment," and then unwittingly added the rather humorous (if it were not so serious) comment, "and I never tire of hearing of it." Where are the watchmen on the walls of Zion to give the trumpet a certain sound? Where are the watchmen who, irrespective of the consequences, are willing to

(Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the House of Jacob their sins? (Isa. 58:1).

Where are the watchmen to

✓...warn the wicked of his ways to turn from it? (Ezek. 33:9).

Where are the ministers who will

(Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine? (2 Tim. 4:2).

Where are the messengers who will speak with power the distinctive message that God has entrusted to this church?

Some years ago our own ministry was greatly enhanced when we recognized the implications of the following statement in *Early Writings*:

(There are many precious truths contained in the Word of God, but it is "*present truth*" that the flock needs now. I have seen the danger of the messengers running off from the important points of "*present truth*," to dwell upon subjects that are not calculated to unite the flock and sanctify the soul. Satan will here take every possible advantage to injure the cause. (EW 63).

This statement represents a tremendous challenge to the ministry of God's church. We believe it helps us to understand why there is such ignorance of the great truths that God has

entrusted to us.

As lads growing up we frequently heard the glorious pillars of our faith. As youth we understood, at least in part, the Sabbath message, the sanctuary message, the investigative judgment, the law of God, the state of the dead and many other central truths. But less and less of our membership hear or understand these messages today. Many times, with false reasoning, we as ministers have presented "precious truth" that is not "present truth." We have reasoned that to preach the strong meat will be discouraging and even divisive within our churches. Such could not be further from the truth. If we continue to study this statement from *Early Writings*, we are informed concerning the central themes of our message and the glorious, unifying understanding that these themes will bring to God's people.

But such subjects as the sanctuary, in connection with the 2300 days, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, are perfectly calculated to explain the past Advent movement and show what our present position is, establish the faith of the doubting, and give certainty to the glorious future. These, I have frequently seen, were the principal subjects on which the messengers should dwell. (EW 63).

It is an alarming fact that numbers of pastors today preach precious truths but ignore the presentation of present truth. Thus we now have a generation of Adventists, many of whom have never really heard this message. And when Satan has brought in heresies and winds of doctrine among us, many of these poorly instructed Seventh-day Adventists have been impotent to perceive the errors and to reject them on the basis of God's Word. Error normally comes through charismatic presentations from men of pleasing address. Even many of our ministers have fallen blindly into these satanic deceptions which are now prevalent within our ranks. Had the minds of our ministry

and of our church members been fortified by the Word of God such a result could not have happened.

Yet we have been led to understand that, within our church, error will come into our ranks to stimulate us to study. Such has been the positive result of the assaults upon God's church. Some within the church have studied the everlasting gospel as at no other time before, and have been strengthened in the faith. They have recognized the Babylonian source of the apostasy and the misuse of the Word of God to support the attack upon God's truth. They recognize that these men and women are not bringing new light, but are presenting falsehood and error that can be traced through apostate Protestantism back to Catholicism and indeed to early paganism. Many teachers of these false doctrines have been encouraged by the apparent readiness with which their presentations have been received by large numbers of those who have listened to them. This fact should cause us no surprise for the warning that Paul gives is

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth; and shall turn unto fables. (2 Tim 4:3,4).

There is another issue which is brought out by Paul that has led to the wholesale acceptance of error by many within the church:

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. (2 Tim 3:1-5).

Paul could have talked about the great perils to come to the physical world, but he prophesied that the greatest perils would be the worldliness and apostasy within God's church. The Laodicean message concurs with this description. The church exhibits the form of godliness, but it denies the power of God. It is lukewarm. As Christ describes it, it is

...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. (Rev 3:17).

There has almost been a conspiracy among us, the ministers, to present our church as spiritually

...rich, and increased with goods, and [having] need of nothing. (Rev 3:17).

The time has come for honesty and integrity amongst the ministry, so that in Christian love and earnestness we may explain the eternal peril with which most of our membership is faced. God's children must be confronted with the great call for reformation, revival, repentance, and the forsaking of sin. /

There is no way that the final gospel invitation can be given by those who are deceived by their own unrighteousness. The message of salvation will be given by a people who represent their Savior authentically; men and women who have allowed Jesus to give them victory over every wrong word and action; men and women who have, by the power of the indwelling Spirit of Christ, been drawn into an unbroken relationship with Him. Many would turn away from the final message because of the flaws and defects in the character of the messengers if this were not the case. The fact that God's people have yet to be entrusted with the latter rain is the surest evidence we have that God's church is not ready for the return of its Savior.

In January 1986 the world witnessed the tragic explosion of the space shuttle *Challenger*. The rockets had awesome power but they were defective. Can you imagine the spiritual destruction if defective people were entrusted with the fullness of the

power of the Holy Spirit? Many would turn away from the truth because of the flaws in our characters and lives.

If we, as pastors or church leaders, can be threatened or flattered into watering down or eliminating the distinctive message of God in our presentations, how shall we stand in the judgment when the stewardship of all will come under review? We are alarmed that our church, your church, and above all God's church, is being frequently served up, Sabbath after Sabbath, the husk and not the grain. We appeal to our fellow ministers and church leaders, in the fear of God and for the love of His people, to once again

...preach the Word . . . in all longsuffering and doctrine. (2 Tim. 4:2).

There are those of us who mistakenly are asserting that the time has come to preach Christ and to downplay doctrine. How blind can we be? How can one preach the second coming of Jesus outside the context of the One who is coming in power and great glory to take home His faithful waiting saints? How can we preach the sanctuary message without preaching of the One who is the Sacrifice and the Priest; the Mediator, Advocate and Intercessor? How can we preach the investigative judgment without the centrality of the One who is our Judge and Advocate, who stands up for His faithful people in the judgment? How can we preach the Sabbath without preaching of the One who is the Creator of the earth and is the Re-creator of all who will yield their lives to Him? How can we preach baptism without centering upon the One who renews life to all? How can we preach the state of the dead without the centrality of the One who is the Resurrection and the Life? Surely the moment is ripe to preach with power and certainty the great doctrines of the Advent faith, to establish our waiting congregations in these great truths for which this people was raised up. Surely the time has come to inspire our brethren and sisters with the need to daily study the Word and search for themselves the truths of the

gospel.

Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. (2 Tim. 4:2).

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.  
(Titus 2:1)

Sadly and mistakenly it is thought by many that to preach the truth in all its clarity will divide the church. It is our firm conviction that truth never divides. In the courts of heaven, it was not truth that divided the angels. In the Garden of Eden, it was not truth that brought misery upon the human race. It was not truth that divided the kingdom of Israel from Judah or that led these kingdoms into captivity. It was not truth that crucified the Son of God. It was not truth that divided the early Christian church (see Gal. 1:6-9; Romans 16:17,18; 2 Cor. 11:2,3; Phil. 3:17,18). It was not truth that divided the Protestant churches. And it is not truth that divides the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It has *never* been truth that has divided the Church. The church has been always divided by error.

One of the most difficult situations for a pastor occurs when he comes into a church that has been infiltrated with satanic error by his predecessor. It is true that often the church will rise up against the faithful messenger, but indeed the church has been divided by the previous pastor. All that truth has done is to highlight the division already within the church.

It is not uncommon for conference officials under these circumstances to encourage, if not demand, that the new pastor preach "only that which unites"—in other words that which is not distinctive to the Advent message. But the faithful servant cannot accept this advice. It is true that when truth is preach-

ed there will frequently be a considerable loss in the church. Understandably this fact brings concern, but it has been our experience that if truth is permitted to be preached, in a short time the recovery of the church is such that many more members accept God's message and great financial growth results.

Well we remember a faithful pastor who was called to the pulpit of a church ravished by a new theology pastor. The new pastor knew nothing but to preach God's distinctive messages. Many of the few members left in the church, including some leaders, rose up against him and reported to the conference leadership that he was doing even more than his predecessor to split the church. Alarmed, the conference president warned the new minister to pastor "the whole church," for all were paying tithes and offerings. Respectfully, but courageously, the pastor told the conference president that he did not need to be the pastor of that church, but while he was, he would do all in his power to preach the distinctives of the Adventist Church. While initially there was a perilous loss of attendance, within two years the church was overflowing with men and women eager to hear God's message. Tithes and offerings multiplied many times. God was honored. Men and women were led to the full truth of the gospel. The true servant of God cannot dilute his messages to placate Laodicea or to tickle the ears of the worldly and secular within his congregation. Eternity is at stake. If the pastor is responsible for making sinners comfortable, he will not only have to stand in the judgment for his own delinquencies, he will also stand responsible for the sins of the people.

In the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church there has never been a more difficult time in which to serve as a minister of the gospel. The challenges are overwhelming. The desire to preach in a winning way is often confused with "soft" preaching. It is important to recognize that even the faithful in the church will frequently fail to rise up against the minister as long as he refrains from preaching outright error. Some of the most subtle dangers do not come from preaching error, because these errors can be successfully challenged from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Insidious dangers arise when present truth is ignored by the messenger. Frequently faithful members have made comments such as "At least our minister is not teaching



error." We remind God's ministers that this is not the basis of faithful witnessing. The Seventh-day Adventist message is the most distinctive and dynamic presentation of truth in the history of the world. If our people are going to stand in the day of test and trial ahead, they must know it and be able to defend it. As ministers, we have the responsibility to prepare them for the great testing trials ahead.

The title of this book was not chosen carelessly or casually. Most of us have lost the full impact of the conclusion of the third angel's message:

Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. (Rev. 14:12).

We have forgotten that the term *keepers* has a full and deep meaning. Especially was it true of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century English in which the King James Bible was

written. A keeper means much more than holding with fidelity the faith. Even today in England the term can be better understood as we think, for example, of the keeper of the Crown jewels. This man is entrusted with the guardianship and protection of those priceless treasures. So too are the members of God's church. We are entrusted to be guardians and protectors of the law of God and the faith of Jesus. In a special way ministers and church leaders are keepers of the faith. And woe unto us if we are negligent in this great task.

This book is not written to win friends. It is, however, written to influence people, especially fellow ministers, to acknowledge our delinquencies and in deep repentance, move forward in the love of God, without compromise, to present the message of salvation and the way of holiness.

## Chapter 4

# DIVINE EXPECTATIONS

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**T**he Word of God emphasizes that much greater expectations are placed upon those who have accepted the responsibility of leadership than upon the flock itself. The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel brought to bear the divine requirements of pastors and shepherds of the flock and clearly outlined the tragic consequences of being unfaithful pastors.

Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion underfoot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. (Jeremiah 12:10).

The prophet expands this indictment with the solemn warning:

Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord. (Jeremiah 23:1-4).

Although Jeremiah is here speaking to the shepherds of Israel, this admonition certainly applies just as surely to the shepherds of modern Israel. The servant of the Lord has indicated that those shepherds and leaders who are not faithful will eventually be swept aside from the positions that, in many instances, they have obtained by political activity.

God has promised that where the shepherds are not true  
He will take charge of the flock Himself. (5T 80).

How tragic it is when men seek to obtain leadership power, when the Lord may have a greater and more important work for them. In honesty we have to admit that the church is rampant with political activism and position seeking.

One overseas delegate to a General Conference session<sup>1</sup> reported that on his way to the meetings he had visited Europe and seen a statue entitled "The Struggle for Life." It depicted men climbing a pole attempting to pull down those above them and kicking those below. The delegate stated that he found the sculpture explicable only when he noted the struggle for position at the General Conference session. Of course this was a gross exaggeration, but it does sadly illustrate a growing trend throughout the church. Interestingly, some years later the delegate was himself called to a General Conference post.

This struggle has affected all levels of our work and most areas of the vineyard. It is hardly possible to dishonor God more than to seek church office rather than to respond to the call of the Lord. The Scripture assures us that those who would be exalted, God will abase, and the few moments of apparent glory that we might have here on earth are nothing to be prized in comparison with the joys of an eternity with our Lord and Saviour. It is discouraging to our laymen to see such worldly methods used and then hear the statement that the will of the Lord has been followed. Such assertions border on blasphemy. Another similar warning is given by the prophet Ezekiel.

Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?....The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and cruelty have ye ruled them. (Ezekiel 34:2,4).

What a challenge this picture poses for pastors! The shepherds of the flock are shown to be unfaithful. They have not fed the flock, they have not sensed the spiritual disease in the flock; they have not sought those who are lost, for they have sought to rule with force and with persecution. With sobering words, the same prophet portrays before us the judgment scene in which those in the ministry of the church are first to come under the condemnation of God. After the angel had set a mark or seal upon the foreheads of all those who sigh and cry for the abominations that have been done in the land, then the other men with the slaughter weapons go to Jerusalem to destroy, where their execution of judgment is first upon the leaders of God's people.

Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. (Ezekiel 9:6).

In commenting concerning the just retribution of God in the judgement upon those who have taken sacred office Sister White says,

No superiority of rank, dignity, or worldly wisdom, no position in sacred office, will preserve men from sacrificing principle, when left to their own deceitful hearts. Those who have been regarded as worthy and righteous, prove to be ringleaders in apostasy, and

examples in indifference in the abuse of God's mercies. Their wicked course will He tolerate no longer, and in His wrath He deals with them without mercy. It is with reluctance that the Lord withdraws His presence from those who have been blessed with great light, and who have felt the power of the Word in ministry to others. They were once His faithful servants, favored with His presence and guidance; but they departed from Him, and led others into error, and therefore are brought under the divine displeasure. (5T 212).

But even more striking is the statement which focuses upon the great negligence of many who have been chosen to lead God's people. Commenting upon Ezekiel 9:6, the servant of the Lord says,

Here we see that the church - the Lord's sanctuary - was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light, and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interest of the people, have betrayed their trust. They have taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God's power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say, the Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. He is too merciful to visit His people in judgment. Thus peace and safety is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God's people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs, that would not bark, are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. (5T 211).

The sober reality is that in these last days, many pastors will be culpable before God in that we have promoted the spiritual declension of God's church. Some pastors, because of fear for our positions or because of strong requirements of others or be-

cause of pressure from our church members or for some other reason, have not sounded the trumpet of warning. Now God places not only the responsibility upon such for their own eternal loss, but also for the eternal loss of the members entrusted to our care.

/ At the end of the Second World War many war criminals argued unsuccessfully that they were merely carrying out the orders of their superiors. Many pastors in the judgment will plead that they failed to warn their congregations because of counsel from their leaders. But such pleas will be no more successful than were the arguments of war criminals. Each minister stands before God responsible for the shepherding of his flock.

Now is not the time for weak, indecisive, unconvicted, uncertain men to take up the challenge of the ministry. The time has come for men of humble but secure faith, who, trusting only in the Lord, are prepared to follow His leading and His counsel whatever the consequences of doing so. Far better to have never entered the ministry than to be responsible for leading men and women into eternal destruction. Our challenge to our own souls and to our fellow ministers is to have that holy boldness that will indeed be the characteristic of all God's faithful ministers as the titanic struggles of these last days last days are faced.

## Chapter 5

# INTELLECTUALISM

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**T**he problems of intellectualism are complex. God wants an intelligent understanding of Himself, His Word, and His salvation. He is not satisfied with surface understanding, nor is He satisfied with an ignorant people. Jesus emphasized this truth when He admonished us, in John 5:39, to search the Scriptures, Paul says:

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim. 2:15).

How can we serve God if we do not know Him? If we are not diligent students of the Word, with an intelligent understanding of the great plan of salvation, and the mystery of conversion, how can we ever be drawn unto Him? Again Paul says:

...then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. (Rom. 10:17).

Then how can we witness this message to the world unless we have an intelligent understanding of its great truths? The final commission of Jesus was

Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. (Matt. 28:19,20).

This commission demands in these last days, our deep and continuing understanding of the Word of God so that it may be presented with power and authority to men and women. Un-

questionably the knowledgeable, informed, intelligent student of the Word stands on vantage ground as he presents the glorious message of the three angels to the world. Ignorance and a slovenly approach to the Word of God are not virtues. Indeed, for every opportunity we have missed to study the Word of God, we will have to give an account in the day of judgment.

However, the intellectualism that we deal with here is of an entirely different emphasis. In the light of the Word of God, we choose to call it pseudo-intellectualism, for it is an intellectualism based upon the philosophies of men and the wisdom of this world. Through the ages, Satan has found ready access to the minds of many of the educated and the intelligent in a manner that draws them away from the simple truths of the Scripture. It is often difficult for a highly educated person to display a simple, abiding and unwavering trust in the Word of God. Often the mind becomes the arbiter of faith, and thus the church, down through the ages, has been infected by rationalism.

As the Seventh-day Adventist Church rightly has stressed education, our people have pursued education out of all proportion to the populations around them. There is no question that the call to develop our talents and to prepare ourselves for the ministry of these end times is a call to educate. It will be minds sharpened by the archdeceiver which will have to be met. Therefore, God cannot be satisfied with less than an educated church, prepared to meet all the wiles of Satan and to give an answer for the faith that pulsates within the breasts of its members. There is no question that those who are educated possess a striking advantage in the presentation of the gospel of Christ. But unfortunately many have sought the education of the world against which God warns:

.. ~~for the wisdom of this world~~ is foolishness with God. (I Cor. 3:19).

Only as we stand firmly by the wisdom of heaven and the purity of the faith do we have the power to present to the world the unadulterated gospel.



Tragically, thousands of Adventists have gone to the world for their education and have sought to bring the elements of humanism, rationalism, secularism, and worldliness into the church. As might be expected, many of these have joined the faculties of the schools, academies, colleges and universities operated by our church and they have often, with unrestrained freedom, presented these false views of education to the young people entrusted to their care. Often these false theories have been presented as new light or as enriching experiences or as understandings that will be relevant to the experience of young people. But almost all such aberrations have their roots in higher criticism and false textual analysis.

In 1973 the Annual Council of the General Conference issued the following warning.

"One of the greatest threats to our institutions of higher learning is seen in the counterfeit philosophies and theologies that may be unconsciously absorbed in worldly institutions by our future teachers and brought back as the 'wine' of Babylon to Adventist Schools." The conditions favoring intellectualism now prevailing in many of our colleges have certainly not been lessened by the passage of time. The warning of our Church leaders in 1973 is even more relevant today. By 1980 the editor of the *Adventist Review* felt compelled to exclaim, We are alarmed by the strange winds of doctrine that blow on some campuses. (*Adventist Review* Feb. 21, 1980).

The penetration of intellectualism into our midst is of very serious proportions and it is having a stultifying effect upon the preaching of God's last message.

There are many who have felt that to bring in the philosophies of the world and the theories of man will strengthen young people as workers of God, but inevitably this course has led to weakness and to a crippling ineffectiveness in the ministry chosen by them:

As preparation for Christian work, many think it essential to acquire an extensive knowledge of historical and theological writings. They suppose that this knowledge will be an aid to them in teaching the gospel. But their laborious study of the opinions of men tends to the enfeebling of their ministry rather than to its strengthening. (CT 379).

Already the church has developed a significant intelligentsia who have established their roots deep into the philosophy of the world. There tends to be a smugness and a feeling of superiority in those belonging to this group. Others who hold to the simple faith are often viewed as obscurantists or anti-intellectuals who are not worthy of serious recognition within the church. But it has been our experience that such intellectuals really are not the thinkers of the church. Often they imbibe the scholastic ebb and flow of the world by reasoning without critical evaluation. They use words such as relevance, meeting the secular mind, and so on, as if somehow by intellectualism one can present the all-embracing love of Christ to the world. This intellectualism is often characterized by statements to the effect that, rather than presenting the distinctive Adventist message to the world, we should be presenting Christ. How shallow such concepts are! God has given us the sure key to the secular mind. It is the medical missionary work. Jesus is

...the Truth. (John 14:6).

To preach Christ is to preach the truth in this world and there is no truth full and complete outside that which has been delivered to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was Christ who said that we are to teach all things whatsoever He has commanded. That means the fullness of the message. To preach anything less is to deny Christ rather than to present Him.

A variation of this futile use of intellectualism as a tool for evangelistic witness is commonly seen in the mission field.

Many well-intentioned missionaries believe that they cannot win souls until they make a thorough study of the cultures and religions of the country. This concept is all part of a search for this apparently highly desirable goal of "relevance." Nowhere is this approach more evident than in countries dominated by the major Asian religions. While not wishing to decry all efforts to meet the potential convert where he is (remember Paul did so) we would suggest that the preaching of Christ and His last message alone brings results. We have noted over a period of five decades the successful witness of those simply presenting God's message and the apparent poor results of those studying deeply into heathen faiths as an avenue of contact.

Often we overlook the fact that the Bible is not a Western document and in many respects it takes more adjustment to the thinking of a Westerner than of an Oriental to accept the words of Scripture. By transcending all racial and cultural barriers God's infinite wisdom has designed a message to be taken to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

In Thailand in the early eighties a meeting was held to discuss the causes of and remedies for the slow progress of God's work there. Many felt that because the Thai people had no Christian background that they could not be helped by the three angels' messages. This view overlooked the universal purpose and scope of these messages. What seems evident is that those preaching these messages found a ready access to the hearts of many who were thirsting for God's truth.

It is among the intellectuals that the tendency to emphasize the view that the day has come when we need to preach doctrine less and Christ more has developed. How can we accept such an unreasoned concept? In his last extant epistle, Paul charged Timothy to preach sound doctrine. He pointed to this time as the era when men and women would not endure sound doctrine. (See 2 Timothy 4:2,3). The artificial separation of doctrine from the love of Christ cannot stand up in the light of

God's commission. To preach the great truths of the Advent faith is to preach Christ and His love.

In emphasis of this fact we would repeat that which we asserted earlier. We, as ministers, should have no doubt as to the message that is to be presented to the world of today. It is delivered to us in the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12 and reinforced by the message of the fourth angel of Revelation 18:1-5. This gospel is the end time gospel:

( Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven and earth. (Rev. 14:7).

It encompasses obedience, character development, the judgment-hour message, and the Sabbath truth. It is the only message relevant in this end time. This saving message is being thwarted by the false views of those who claim to be the intelligentsia of the church. In many ways, these pseudo-intellectuals are having a profound influence upon the church and even its leadership. It has become more and more evident that it is easier for such thinkers to obtain senior appointments in the church and to have their perceptions incorporated into beliefs and practices than it is for those who love the Adventist truth. It is hard not to perceive an active, organized and well orchestrated thrust by those who

✓... would pervert the gospel of Christ. (Gal. 1:7).

Their success seems to hinge on a systematic effort to move the church step by step away from its fundamental Truths and practices. Once this goal has been achieved, it is easy to declare that those who uphold the truths of the remnant Church are extremists, fanatics and too far to the right. What was once mainstream Adventism is now openly attacked and ridiculed. These false teachers pervert the faith and destroy the gospel of Jesus. We must neither be part of them nor allow them to prevail. The army of Christ must arise, always in Christian love

and never in bitterness, but with a loyalty to Christ our Captain, with a view to the vindication of God's truth:

Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 18:3).

## Chapter 6

# EVANGELICALISM

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**C**losely associated with these intellectual thrusts has been the assault of evangelical thought within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The concepts of the evangelical movement of Protestantism have made frightening gains within our church. We stand foursquare against the errors of evangelicalism because they have their roots deeply embedded within paganism and Catholicism. Few people understand the origin of the evangelical movement. They often see it as an extension of the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. But it is not so.

Often we have heard within our church calls to come back to the message of the Reformation, forgetting that the truth

... shineth more and more unto the perfect day. (Prov. 4:18)

/ While not wanting to depreciate the wonderful insights of the Reformation, the Seventh-day Adventist Church could not have risen out of Lutheranism nor Calvinism nor Presbyterianism, for they were still far from the purity of the faith of God's Word. It took later movements such as the Wesleyan movement of England and America to set the stage for the fuller light that God has delivered to this church.

That many Adventist preachers are attracted to these patent errors was highlighted by President Robert Pierson's speech on the occasion of the announcement of his retirement as General Conference president. He asserted, "There are some who point to the Reformers and contemporary theologians as a source and

the norm for Seventh-day Adventist doctrine....There are those who covet and would court the favor of the Evangelicals." (*Adventist Review*, Oct. 26, 1978). With President Pierson we would urge, "Fellow leaders, beloved brethren and sisters—don't let it happen!...I appeal to Andrews University, to the Seminary, to Loma Linda University—don't let it happen!" (Ibid.)

A little understanding of the background of evangelicalism will help us to understand its dangerous origins. There is no question that all great religious heresy finds its root in the Babylonian religion which forced its impact upon the nations of the world including the great empires of Assyria, Syria, Egypt, Greece and Rome. The gods of pagan Rome were just extensions of the Babylonian gods of the ancient world. The theological concepts were the same, having their origins in the garden of Eden, the balancing of good and evil, of truth and error.

In Christendom no early church father brought these pagan concepts into the church more than did Augustine, bishop of Hippo. Augustine was born in North Africa, the son of a Christian mother and a Manicheist father. Manicheism, an offshoot of Zoroastrianism, the ancient Persian religion, like all major pagan religions is built upon the balancing of the cosmic forces within the universe--good and evil, truth and error, light and darkness, male and female, hot and cold, height and depth, and other similar opposites. Today this concept can be seen in Hinduism, Shintoism, Taoism and Buddhism. Whereas Christianity teaches the triumph of good over evil, truth over error, light over darkness, the ancients saw these in balanced cosmic tension. Thus the gods of paganism are male, female or perhaps hermaphrodite gods. It is also the reason the pagans had male and female priests. They, further, had good gods and bad gods. The task was somehow to learn how to ingratiate oneself to the good gods to receive all their blessings while not angering the bad gods in order to avoid their curses.

All the symbols of paganism are symbols of balance. The

most ancient and degraded of all these is the cross, the balancing of the horizontal and the vertical. Unquestionably because of this fact, Satan in his diabolical effort to destroy Christ nailed Him to this most degrading pagan symbol. The Star of David, now upheld as the symbol of Judaism, is an ancient pagan symbol, the balancing of the upright and the inverted triangles. Colin, on one occasion asked a rabbi to explain the origin of the Star of David. He simply replied, "Its origins are lost in antiquity." What he should have said is, "Its origins are lost in paganism."

While visiting the Mayan ruins in Copan, Honduras, a few years ago, Colin was surprised to see a perfect Star of David on one of the pagan buildings. The Hindus have used the swastika as their symbol of balance. Both the left-handed and the right-handed swastika are found commonly upon their temples. The Chinese and the Koreans use the famous yin and yang symbolized by the two "tadpoles" interlocked within the circle. The ancient Chinese too developed almost 300 polar opposites such as hot and cold, light and darkness, height and depth, male and female, good and evil, length and breadth, weak and strong, from pagan influences.

Augustine was brought up as a Manicheist by his father. He had imbibed all the concepts of paganism in his youth. In his twenties he was converted to Christianity while a student in Milan. There is no question that his pagan background had a deep, profound and lasting impact upon his theology. His theology eventually became the prevailing theology of the Catholic Church, especially over the subsequent 700 years. It is not surprising then that Catholicism today is infiltrated with pagan concepts and understandings. It was not until the time of Thomas Aquinas that there was any significant breach of the stranglehold of Augustinian theology upon the Catholic Church.

Thus Augustine saw a God who was arbitrary, who had total



control. He could not conceive of a God who gave free choice and so his concept of predestination became riveted within Christianity. This concept held that it is not for us as erring humans to question the justice of God in that He preordains some to eternal salvation and others to eternal damnation. This pernicious doctrine led to the once-saved-always-saved teaching. If God is in total control, it logically follows that He does not change His mind and therefore those who are saved, irrespective of their conduct, can never be lost. Naturally these teachings led to carnal security by asserting that those who are predestined to salvation are saved in their sins. Augustine believed that it was impossible to gain victory over sin and established the concept of original sin and its close companion, the total depravity of man, to support his conviction. This concept held that man not only inherited the weakness and predispositions to sin of Adam, but he was also guilty of the very sin of Adam. This view was enunciated in spite of the fact that the Scripture declares that a man will die for his own sins (Exodus 32:33) and Paul's clarification that all die because all have sinned (Romans 5:12).

The doctrine of original sin, blindly accepted today even by some of our own ministry, takes away man's personal responsibility for sin. This doctrine teaches that we are sinners because we possess a fallen nature, a matter over which we have absolutely no control. Contrary to this view, the Scripture teaches that we ourselves are entirely responsible for sinning, for sin is a volitional act. The only definition provided by God is

Sin is the transgression of the law. (1 John 3:4).

Sister White reminds us

No man can be forced to transgress. His own consent must first be gained; the soul must purpose the sinful act.(5T 177).

James confirms this point:

Therefore to him that *knoweth* to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (James 4:17, emphasis supplied).

This verse merely confirms Jesus' statement in which He assured us that

If ye were blind ye should have no sin. (John 9:41).

Nowhere does Scripture teach that the possession of a fallen nature per se makes us sinners even before we sin. It is curious that ministers will tenaciously hold to views for which they can find absolutely no biblical support, while ignoring the most pointed scriptural passages to the contrary.

Initially Augustine held that the sex drive was the original sin and it was impossible to gain victory over it. He fathered an illegitimate child in confirmation of this fact. However later he added a broader concept of original sin. This error profoundly affected Christian thought. Obviously Christ could not have inherited original sin or He could not be our Saviour and Redeemer. If He possessed original sin, He would have been a sinner by birth. Therefore the concept that Christ had the nature of Adam before he fell became a prevailing concept within the realm of Christianity. It was to find its expression many centuries later in the acceptance of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. This doctrine declared that Mary was immaculately conceived so that she could bear a Son with a sinless nature. The question then arose as to how Christ, who was claimed to have a nature entirely different from that of fallen humanity, could be our Mediator. This reasoning led to Maryology, to the worship of saints, and the mediation of priests, men who could truly be said to have like temptations as we have, and have borne what we have to bear, for Christ was seen to lack the essential criterion for His high priestly role since the plain words of the Bible had been rejected:

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful

high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted. (Heb. 2:1, 18)

Other questions arose. One of these was related to what we can do about this total depravity. Eventually the church decided that it was handled through baptism. This inevitably led to the next question. "What happens to those not baptized?" The answer was simple--"Eternal burning torment." We can imagine the consternation and anguish of parents whose children were dying by the thousands from infectious diseases and other causes, learning that their little ones were to be tormented eternally in an ever-burning hell because they possessed original sin. This belief quickly led the church to invent the concept of limbo. Certainly limbo wasn't heaven, but it was considerably superior to an ever-burning hell. But even then the parents could not be satisfied because they would never see their little ones again and their anguish was still overwhelming. Thus came the doctrine of infant baptism. There are many cases extant of priests sprinkling "holy water" over the abdomen of women dying in childbirth declaring that both mother and child were now assured of a home in heaven. In the case of the child its "original sin" had been cleansed by this act of "baptism."

There can be no question that Augustine began with wrong premises derived from paganism and thus led the Christian church into a whole logical sequence of errors that have influenced the Christian community to this day. Augustine's brilliant logic overcame the strong opposition of his contemporary, Plegius.

It is well to note that Luther was an Augustinian monk. In his autobiography, he indicated that he had read over and over again and imbibed fully the writings of Augustine before he had so much as set his eyes upon the Word of God. Thus it is not surprising to find that, while Luther was able to throw off al-

most all the post-Augustinian heresies, he retained almost every Augustinian error including original sin and the total depravity of man, predestination, the once-saved-always-saved concept, the unfallen nature of Christ, and infant baptism.

Some have questioned why the Lutheran Church is not predominately predestinarian today. The answer is simple. After the death of Luther, Melancthon led the Lutheran Church away from predestination.

Thus we have to recognize that evangelical reform theology has its roots deep in paganism and in Augustinian Catholicism. This fact should be sufficient to make these errors anathema to every Bible-believing Christian. And indeed they must be. These teachings are not Seventh-day Adventism, as they are inconsistent with the last message that God has given to the world. These errors are built upon Satan's original lie and it is painful to hear those who claim to be the remnant of Israel declaring the concepts of Augustine, in part or full, to be truth.

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church today, three Augustinian errors are commonly propounded--original sin, the unfallen human nature of Christ, and the continuance of saints in sin until Jesus comes. How tragic and eternally critical are the consequences of these errors! There is not one verse of Scripture nor one word of the testimony of the Spirit that would give credence to the concept that Christ had an unfallen nature. Paul above all the authors of the Bible, goes to great lengths to show that Christ had a nature like ours.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren,

that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted. (Heb. 2:14-18).

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. (Heb. 4:15).

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. (Rom 8:3).

Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh. (Rom. 1:3).

And John also expresses this in these triumphal words.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:14).

The Bible plainly states that a failure to accept the fact that Christ took the nature of fallen man is the central error of the antichrist.

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. (1 John 4:2,3).

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. (2 John 7).

Like the Reformers, Seventh-day Adventist identify the

Papacy as the anti-Christ. It is readily determined that the Papacy propounds the view that Christ took sinless flesh. Therefore it seems evident that this view is the spirit of anti-Christ. Further, as has been seen, from this doctrine springs key errors of Catholicism, including the immaculate conception, infant baptism, confession, prayers to saints, Maryology, limbo, etc.

Never once does the Scripture declare that Christ came in sinless flesh or in unfallen flesh. Scores of times Sister White used the terms fallen or sinful flesh in respect of Christ. Never once did she describe Christ's nature or flesh as unfallen or sinless. Many unfortunately confuse the nature of Christ with His character. Christ's character was perfect. Never for a moment did He begin to respond to the temptations of Satan. He was always in a total and unmovable relationship with His Father. But Jesus gained the victory having been tempted in all points like as we are, having been challenged in the way we are challenged. Therefore He alone qualifies to be our faithful High Priest; He is the One who stands up for us in the judgment, He is the One to present His life in place of our life.

The Seventh-day Adventist faith rightly teaches that man inherits the weakness of Adam and inevitably moves in the pathway of selfishness, sin, and alienation from God. But for the grace of God, none of us could be saved and none could resist temptation. Through His grace and power we are drawn to Him. By our yielding to Him we are reborn into His image.

Rightly the Advent faith teaches that Christ came in the nature of Adam after the fall. This teaching does not infer that Christ possessed an unregenerate nature. Indeed we understand that from His earliest times, He had a sanctified human will.

Jesus Christ is our example in all things. He began life, passed through its experiences, and ended its record, with a sanctified human will. He was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet because He kept His will

surrendered and sanctified, He never bent in the slightest degree toward the doing of evil, or toward manifesting rebellion against God. (ST Oct. 29, 1894).

As such, He did not require to be born again as we do. Some have suggested that this gave Christ an advantage. Yes, it gave Him every advantage over the unregenerate man, but He possessed no advantage over those who are born again, for the same divine and infinite power of God is available to us. Therefore, the true Adventist faith teaches that we can, and will, and indeed must, have victory over every wrong thought, word and action if we are to be saved in the kingdom of heaven. God does not take defective characters to heaven, for such would again initiate the cycle of sin. Adventism does not hold the legalistic notion that we are saved by such obedience. Only the sacrifice and high-priestly ministry of Christ brings salvation. But it is just so certain that God's Word declares that Christ's salvation is bestowed upon those alone who meet His condition of obedience.

Now some have confused this statement as inferring that only those who have perfect knowledge can be saved. Of course only God has perfect knowledge. This perfection is built around allowing the power of Christ to gain victory over every revealed sin.

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (James 4:17).

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent. (Acts 17:30).

Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth. (John 9:41).

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. (John 15:22).

When we understand this definition of sin, we find the Bible is replete with statement after statement of Christ's power to restore a perfect character in a sin-damaged nature.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. (Jude 24).

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. (Titus 2:14,15).

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Cor. 10:13).

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (Rev. 19:8).

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:25-27).

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. (1 Peter 2:21,22).

It is our belief that if more of our preachers and people knew the origin of what is so commonly being presented in our pulpits today, there would be a marked reversal of these teachings in God's church. Indeed the favor shown by some of our fellow ministers towards evangelicalism would speedily dissipate if



they only perceived the true nature of its teachings, for these are subtle deceptions. In these last days we must eschew counterfeit doctrines and cleave to the truths demonstrated so plainly in God's Word. Evangelicalism unquestionably is included in the compass of "Babylon" from which God has commissioned us to call His true followers. What a loving God we have. He is a God who chooses to forgive us and to deliver us from the bondage of sin and guilt.

## Chapter 7

# ECUMENICALISM

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**W**e grew up in an age of Christian polarity. There was still a strong demarcation between Protestantism and Catholicism and between more fundamental Protestants and those of more liberal persuasions. But rapidly the boundaries are becoming blurred. While we do not support much of the polemic rhetoric of past generations, nevertheless we strongly support the scriptural and the Spirit of Prophecy demarcation between truth and error.

Today we live in a different climate. When we were lads, Pope Pius XII ruled both the Vatican and the Catholic Church. He was an intelligent man, but not a difficult man to distrust. Even among Catholics, there was considerable suspicion. He was suspected, not without reason, of more than a little sympathy toward the Nazi cause of Adolph Hitler. Indeed this suspicion was given considerable credence by the fact that before becoming pope he had been papal nuncio to Germany.

Possibly more than any other way, we understood the hostility of many to the Catholic Church through our association with our grandfather, John Bailey. Though born in Australia, he was of Northern Irish parents. Our great grandparents, Bailey and Anne Bailey, died before we were born. But from our grandfather, we recognized that their strongest religion was anti-Catholicism, for this was the bias of our grandfather. As an Orangeman he had all the pent-up emotional bigotry that we see today in the conflict in Northern Ireland. An Orangeman is a member of the Orange Lodge, an extreme anti-Catholic or-

ganization, originated in Ireland. It took its name from William of Orange, a Protestant king who ruled as William III, displacing his father-in-law, King James II, the last Catholic king of England.

*The Rock*, a paper put out by strong anti-Catholic elements in Australia, was perhaps our grandfather's favorite publication as it outlined, often in sordid detail, the excesses of the Catholic Church. In the 1940s, with many Australians this paper was popular.

In 1974 Russell, while practicing as a physician at Sydney Adventist Hospital, examined a patient whom he had not previously treated. It was a cold winter's day and as the gentleman was undressing in order to be examined he suddenly exclaimed, "Do you know that I am public enemy number one?" The first impression following this statement was that in addition to his cardiac problems, this man was psychologically disturbed.

But in a moment he explained his assertion by withdrawing two copies of *The Rock* from deep inside his overcoat, and thrusting them toward Russell he stated, "I'm the editor of *The Rock*."

We were unaware that the publication was still printed, having not heard of it for at least twenty years.

In discussion, it was discovered that in its heyday in the 1940s, *The Rock*, whose editor was Mr. Campbell, a member of a strict off-shoot of the Presbyterian Church, had a readership of 40,000 per week. By 1974 the circulation of *The Rock* had dropped to 2,000 per month. When asked the reason for this catastrophic reduction in patronage, Mr. Campbell, a member of a strict offshoot division of the Presbyterian Church, offered a single word which he himself had coined: "Ecumaniacs."

There can be no doubting the fact that the change in Protestant attitudes towards the Catholic Church has been marked. While the authors deplore the polemics and the bigotry that characterized much anti-Catholic sentiment, nevertheless they,

sense that today in the world and indeed in the church, there is an attitude of great tolerance of the apostasy and the excesses that have characterized the Catholic Church down through the ages.

Upon the death of Pope Pius XII in 1958, the world was surprised by the choice of the 77-year-old Cardinal Roncalli as the new pope. Many names had been suggested, but Roncalli's name had not surfaced as a possible choice, largely because of his advanced age. It was confidently predicted that his reign as pope would be an interim period in which the College of Cardinals would take the opportunity to groom the man whom they wanted to shape the future of the Catholic Church. But how wrong these predictions were! In the four years of his reign, Pope John XXIII, as he became known, was to change the whole image of Catholicism from one of suspicion and intrigue to that of love and ecumenicalism. His calling of the second Vatican Council proved to be a dramatic turning point in world opinion. Rapidly the Christian community, and indeed the world at large, came to view the Papacy in an altogether different light. In fact so dramatic was the impact of this beloved pope that by 1960 America could do the impossible by electing a Catholic to the White House.

Upon the death of Pope John XXIII, the stage had already been set for the projection of a new and different image of the Catholic Church. It is true that during his relatively long leadership, the new pontiff, Cardinal Montini (Pope Paul VI), did little to actively advance that newly created image, but neither did he reverse it.

The short reign of Pope John Paul I did not permit him the time to put his impact upon the direction of the church. Upon his death the College of Cardinals shocked the world by appointing, for the first time in four centuries, a non-Italian pope, Cardinal Wojtyla, who has become known as Pope John Paul II. Already he has pushed the frontiers of Catholicism beyond any

of his predecessors. Here is a man strong for conservative Catholicism and yet one who has molded the thinking of the world in such a way that no longer are there more than isolated elements of opposition to the political intrigues of the Catholic Church. Indeed, to actively present the background of the former persecutions and the corruptions of the church, is now often viewed as bigoted and intolerant. More than any of his predecessors, Pope John Paul II has visited other countries. He has visited not only Catholic countries, but also predominately Protestant countries and not only Christian nations but non-Christian nations as well. Almost inevitably wherever he has gone he has been met with unbelievable adulation. Indeed more and more the world is looking to him for leadership. Some time ago a survey taken indicated that Pope John Paul II was far ahead of President Reagan and General Secretary Andropov of the USSR as the one whom the world thought had the greatest prospect of bringing peace to the planet. This hope revolves around a man who rules the smallest state of the world, one-sixth of a square mile. But the impact of the 800,000,000 Catholics scattered around the world, places him ruler over more people than any other with the exception the head of The People's Republic of China.

We have seen the remarkable change of direction of the United States towards this power. Could one have imagined in an earlier generation a President of the United States actually having a meeting with the pope in an election year? Such an action would, in past times, have spelled his demise at the ballot box. But in 1984 President Reagan could evaluate that such a meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska, could actually enhance his prospects of favorable voter reaction. His subsequent re-election, by an overwhelming majority confirmed the correctness of his judgment. The re-establishment of full diplomatic relationships between the USA and the Vatican State was able to pass without the serious outcry that in former generations forestalled any,

such move by the White House. More and more we see the religious world turning to Rome for its guidance and direction. It would once have been unbelievable for the pope to preach in a Lutheran Church as he did on the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther. The prospects for the reunification of the Anglican Church with the Church of Rome now appear very strong. A significant fact is that in the detailed summary of the issues confronting this reunification, no barrier of a doctrinal nature was established. Rather concerns centered around the acceptance by the Catholic Church of the prior ordination of Anglican priests and the ordination of women priests. The issues of the infallibility of the pope, the mass and the immaculate conception are apparently not now considered by the Anglicans as barriers to union. Ecumenism has so advanced that the Pope has now been welcomed to an Italian synagogue. The ecumenical movement undoubtedly is on the march.

Many of our ministers now completely ignore God's warning concerning the Roman Catholic Church. We do so at peril to our own souls and the peril of the souls of our congregations. Let the restraints now imposed by secular governments be removed and Rome be reinstated in her former power and there will speedily be a revival of her tyranny and persecution.(GC 564)

Many point to the catastrophic and frightening conditions in the world today as sound reason for Christendom to unite. The issue of unity built around truth and sanctification (John 17:17) hardly is given a mention. The time is here when all the world is wondering after the beast. (Rev 13:3).

What can be stated for the Protestant and the Jewish world is equally true in non-Christian countries. When in 1986, Pope John Paul II visited Singapore, a country of Buddhists, Taoists, Hindus and Moslems, his welcome exceeded that of any individual in living memory. This welcome was typical of that he has received upon his visits to numerous non-Christian nations

including India, Thailand, Japan and several African republics.

But our concerns are much more directed towards the ecumenical impact upon the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At the rise of the Advent movement, the distinctiveness of the message and the urgency of the mission permitted not the slightest accommodation of apostate Protestantism nor Catholicism. Indeed as the pioneers of the Adventist Church explored the great prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, they saw in their studies the greatest evidence, as had the sixteenth-century Reformers, that the Roman Catholic Church was the little horn, the antichrist, the man of sin, the beast, Babylon and the mother of harlots. They had accepted the historicist view of prophetic interpretation. This view denied that the prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8 had met their fulfillment before the time of Christ in the excesses of Antiochus Epiphanes, a rather obscure Seleucid king who proved to be a vassal to Rome. They also vigorously opposed the Jesuit-inspired interpretation that the little horn pointed into the future to some personage who, at the very end of time, would rise up and become the antichrist. Rather the antichrist was seen in the personage of the succession of popes, in the great counterfeit system of Rome.

Pioneer preachers and evangelists accepted the challenge of calling men and women out of Babylon. They took seriously the clearest evidence of Daniel 7 and 8, of Revelation 13, 17 and 18, that indeed this great power would oppose God and His truth. They saw in the Papacy the great persecuting power of all ages which would, at the end of time, intensify that persecution beyond all measure so that

... all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8).

They saw in the rise of the United States the fulfillment of Revelation 13:11, the lamblike beast which would become the enforcer of the papal decrees. This tyranny would lead the

United States to dictate total economic boycott of those who do not have

... the mark, or the name of the beast or the number of his (Rev. 13:17).

The Papacy was seen as the power that would eventually enact a death decree against all who refused to follow the dictates and apostasy of the beast (Rev. 13:15).

✓ Today the voice of the Adventist Church has decreased to a whisper. No longer do we hear the loud cry for separation from the world and worldliness. Indeed, far more we are hearing voices thrusting forward the concept of ecumenicalism. The distinctiveness and the exclusiveness of the God-given end-time mission of the Adventist Church no longer is portrayed in a viable or vital way by most. The issues of tolerance and understanding have been so perverted that it is considered by many, even some in leadership positions, unkind and un-Christian to declare that the Church of Rome and its Protestant daughters have corrupted and perverted the great truth of God for the world.

Much of the ecumenical attitude in the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been fostered in our colleges. In 1970 Dr. Desmond Ford, ignoring the express statements of inspiration, stated in his doctoral thesis at Manchester University that the man of sin was neither an individual in the past nor a succession of individuals. Yet he continued at Avondale College and Pacific Union College teaching this error to our young people for nine more years. This instances a key mechanism by which the error of ecumenicalism has entered our ranks.

More and more we see evidence within our church of a drift towards the ecumenical movement. It is true that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not officially joined the World Council of Churches, a radical, left-wing oriented organization that frequently has been seen to launder money to terrorist groups around the world. However, the connection is becoming



stronger and stronger. The appointment of Adventists to certain study groups of the World Council of Churches and the payment of fees to certain information agencies of the World Council of Churches pose grave dangers. Further, the linkage in some countries, notably Hungary, of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to ecumenical organizations related to the World Council of Churches has produced an alarming state of affairs and engendered grave results. As at the time of the writing of this book, those who have stood unwaveringly against this move have suffered grave religious and political consequences.

In Hungary it has been confirmed by the General Conference leadership that those who have nobly opposed the connection of our church in that country with the ecumenical theological colleges have been illegally disfellowshipped by the Hungarian Union of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The official presentation of a gold medal to Pope Paul VI by the then Secretary of the Northern European Division did nothing to dispel the concerns of those ministers and laypeople earnestly upholding the uniqueness of our faith.

In 1985, at an ecumenical dialogue at Windsor in England, in which the Seventh-day Adventist Church was represented, the major focus was upon bringing the Adventist Church into a closer relationship to the fellowship of other church groups. The report in *Christian Century* of this meeting has brought great concern to many of God's truth-loving people. While the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy is unequivocal that the Adventist Church should take, as a special project, its witness to ministers of other church denominations, we have often gone far beyond this instruction to social fellowship. In so doing, we have muted our voice and minimized the great apostasy seen within both Catholicism and Protestantism. /

Today it is rare for Seventh-day Adventist ministers or indeed for our evangelists to raise the issue of the impact of Catholicism and apostate Protestantism upon the end of time. A

false concept of love and concern for our separated brethren has led many to almost ignore one of the greatest commissions given to God's people--to declare the apostasy of fallen Christendom. We hasten to explain that we do not in any way support an approach which sometimes has been followed in the past where, with great antagonism and perceived hatred, we have declared the excesses of the papal church. Certainly in sincere love and sensitivity for the faithful in Rome and in Protestantism, we must call them in clarion and unmistakable tones to come out of her and be separate, that Christ may have His one fold united and undivided when He returns. In doing so in a godly way we will be fulfilling the divine injunction

Let all see that your feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace and goodwill to men.

Wonderful are the results we shall see if we enter the work imbued with the Spirit of Christ. If we carry the Word forward, in righteousness, mercy and love, help will come in our necessity. Truth will triumph and bear away the victory. (*Pacific Union Recorder*, Oct. 23, 1902).

Since the time of the Barnhouse and Martin dialogue in the 1950s there has been a growing affinity with ecumenism by some of our ministers. Others, seeing themselves in the garb of theologians, covet recognition by the theological community at large. Just as our physicians wish for acclaim and acceptance by the medical fraternity (sometimes also a dangerous desire), many theologians are similarly motivated. This motivation inevitably directs them towards the acceptance of ecumenical principles. Let us as ordained men heed God's advice:

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing. (2Cor. 6:17).

Many ministers feel that great good has been achieved in their fellowship with the ministerial fraternity of their area.

While perhaps in isolated cases it has become an opportunity to witness to the ministry of other churches, it has more often led ministers to become enamored with this relationship so that no longer do they find themselves prepared to preach the truth either to their own congregations or to the community at large. This trend has been exacerbated by the use of apostate Protestant and Catholic pastors in our pulpits. Thus in many areas, the witness of truth has almost ground to a halt.

It is true that the message God has entrusted to us is not a popular message. But that message of warning and of separation is a message that God continues to ask us to repeat. False views of love have muted the voice of God's church in a time when it is even more relevant than ever before to cry aloud and spare not, to give the trumpet a certain sound, and to call men and women to the righteousness of Christ and the fullness of His truth than ever before. Now we must preach with greater power the central message upholding the true and condemning the apostasy. Sin and apostasy have to be called by their right name. Such topics as the mark of the beast and the seal of God must be defined in such a way that all honest men and women will receive the saving invitation of Christ. The redefinition of the distinctiveness of the Advent Church and its message and mission represent perhaps the greatest and most urgent need in the church today.

## Chapter 8

# PLURALISM

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**I**t could hardly be said that the Seventh-day Adventist Church commenced with an eclectic vision of truth. As the pioneers of the church studied the Word, prayed, and received divine revelation, the certainty of the Advent faith and the distinctiveness of its message became the earmark of the assuredness with which their message was proclaimed. These pioneers saw no place for divergent views on any of the great pillars of the faith.

It is true that frequently Ellen White and others warned against making strong division over areas of study that were not testing truths, but for the foundational pillars of the faith, including those doctrines largely distinctive to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, they refused to compromise or to allow deviation from these truths. They recognized that Christ is the Truth; that He is the One who "changeth not" and they saw no reason for uncertainty or optional interpretations. As for the doctrines of the sabbath, the sanctuary message, the law of God, the state of the dead, the judgment, the Second Coming, the human nature of Christ or perfection of Christian character, and other matters clearly grounded upon Scripture, there was no room for divergent views.

In the skeptical climate of the twentieth century, fueled by the philosophical concepts of scientific investigation, it is no longer popular to hold firm and unequivocal views. It is considered to be arbitrary and close-minded. The scientific method allows for no absolutes, no final proofs or truths. Based upon the fact that we cannot prove hypotheses and theories but only

disprove them, this same notion has been applied to the Word of God. That such an arbitrarily defined methodology should be forced upon the Seventh-day Adventist church in relation to its doctrines by some who consider themselves to be the thought leaders of the Church, is totally unacceptable. To apply such methodology to the Scripture is to deny the very words of Scripture itself.

Prove all things. (1 Thess. 5:21).

The startling drift toward pluralism in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is but a reflection of an alarming trend within Christendom this century. Commenting upon this trend Dr. J. I. Packer, professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Regent College said:

Note the pluralism of modern theological thought. By pluralism I mean not only the existence of competing alternative theologies, which different thinkers develop in different ways to explicate and undergird Christian faith and life (that aspect of pluralism, like the poor, is always with us). I mean also the acceptance of this state of affairs as normal and healthy. This acceptance, now general in the mainstream Western churches, including the Roman Catholic communion (not the Orthodox, though), is a twentieth-century novelty to which, understandably enough, many find it hard to adjust. The assumption that the more theologies there are together, the healthier and livelier we shall all be, is a startling departure from the traditional conviction that, because truth is one, unanimity of thought about it, and unanimous expression of it, is the only proper goal for the church to seek. But it seems clear that, whether it be wisdom or folly (my readers will make up their own mind about that), this novel assumption has come to stay and will hardly be uprooted in our lifetime. (Packer's Introduction to Paul W. Fromer, "The Best In Theology")

Christianity Today, Inc., pp. 15-17.)

Packer gives four basic sources of this pluralism.

(1) The heavy emphasis among liberal Protestants on the impossibility of treating biblical teaching as revealed and therefore normative truth.

(2) The heavy emphasis among neo-orthodox Protestants on the notion that new truth, never before seen, might break forth from new selective combinations of biblical strands of thought.

(3) The heavy emphasis among Roman Catholics on the distinction, canonized by John XXIII and Vatican II, between the unchanging substance of the faith and changing ways of expressing it.

(4) The heavy emphasis in ecumenical theological dialogue on the defensive provincialism of historic confessional traditions.

Packer insightfully concludes:

The net result of all these impulses to pluralism is that there are just about as many theologies as there are theologians to devise them; the concept of heresy has almost lost its meaning; and loyalty to the institutional church has for the most part taken the place of loyalty to the faith once for all delivered to the saints, for no one is quite sure any more what the essence of that faith really is.

Tragically, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not escaped the inroads of pluralism. Many equate it with the growing maturity of the church as if it were a virtue. Others see it as stimulating healthy debate. But to the perceptive keeper of the faith, it is seen for what it really is: Satan's deceptive plan to turn God's people away from the truth that sanctifies and unites.

As lads growing up, we frequently heard the words "the certainty of the Advent faith." It was more than mere verbiage. It was a living reality in the lives of the overwhelming majority

of Seventh-day Adventists. Of course at this time most Adventists had a deep understanding of the message and its truths. It was a time when most new members were thoroughly grounded in the doctrines of God over at least a six- to twelve-month period before baptism. Crusades often lasted up to six months. Such is not the mood of the church today. Quickly men and women who have heard three weeks of Adventist preaching have been hastened into the baptismal font. We have been alarmed by the number of those within the Church who have little or no concept of the great truths of the Advent movement. Frequently we are aware that no understanding of such truths as the sanctuary, the investigative judgment, and the Spirit of Prophecy has been presented to these people before their baptism. Can we wonder that the carnage of souls is so great today? We need not be taken by surprise with what happens to such people when somewhere along the way they hear these truths, often in sketchy presentations with much taken for granted, rather than during an in-depth Bible study. They feel that they have been deceived, and that they have not understood that into which they have been baptized. Thus many quickly drop away from the church.

Colin recalls, after preaching on the investigative judgment, the very agitated response of a woman to her pastor. She had never heard of the investigative judgment. Indeed, as was later ascertained, she had never heard of the heavenly sanctuary ministry of Jesus Christ. Colin decided that, on the following day, he would make it his objective to sit by this woman at the fellowship dinner. In dialogue he was astounded to discover that she had been baptized for 15 years. She declared she had never before heard these messages. She seemed, however, very willing to study them and wanted to understand them.

How contrasting such situations are today with that which was the ruling mode of Seventh-day Adventist evangelism of our boyhood and youth! How can we ever erase from our

memory the crusade of Pastor George Burnside in our home city, Newcastle, Australia, in 1951? As 17-year-olds we heard the certainty and assurance of the message that he bore. There were many who questioned whether the industrial city of Newcastle could ever be penetrated by the gospel, but the 130 souls who were baptized into the church as a result of that crusade showed that, when the message was preached with power and with certainty, and God's Holy Spirit was present, men and women were willing to listen, believe, and accept. Indeed, fifteen years after that crusade, Colin was sitting in a barber's chair in Newcastle. On learning that he was then a faculty member at Avondale College, and associating this school with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the barber recalled that he had attended the meetings of George Burnside. Even then there was a clear recollection of the greatness of the presentations that were made and the assurance of the message that was presented. Though unfortunately he had not accepted these messages, the barber had not forgotten the witness and the clarity with which that certain witness had been made.

Frequently it is different today, especially among those who class themselves as the scholars of the church. There are increasing cries for plurality and eclecticism within the church. Often these calls are placed within the context of a maturing church. Such statements as "the Adventist Church has come of age," "The church no longer needs to repress variant views concerning the great doctrines of Christ," are recited and pluralism is espoused. We are beginning to see in our publications more and more uncertainty of the message, so that now we can see books from our presses that offer contrasting views. Indeed as one reviews the titles available in our Adventist Book Centers today, we can almost choose cafeteria style the kind of "Adventism" that we wish to read and to believe.

Such books as *Perfection: The Impossible Possibility*, in which two quite incompatible views were presented, are published by



our presses. We can read in the *Ministry* magazine two contrasting views on the nature of Christ as if we can choose the one of our own pleasing. We are not here talking about the periphery of our faith; we are talking about the very centrality of faith—the nature of Christ, His earthly ministry and the way of salvation. The tragedy is that these issues were well defined and unitedly held by all from the middle of last century until at least the 1940s, but over the last forty years there has been a constant erosion of truth so that fewer and fewer people are certain of their faith. Perhaps no area has shown the misrepresentation of the pioneers more than the critical truth of Christ's fallen human nature. Dr. Ralph Larson's book, *The Word Was Made Flesh*, (Cherrystone Press, California) shows a consistency of understanding by church writers for 100 years, until the deliberate intrusion of the uncertainty of the 1950s. /

Today confusion and indecision mark a considerable portion of the membership of the church. We ministers must bear a heavy responsibility for this state of affairs. Often we have curtailed our messages in order to please those of our number who would cast doubt upon the truth. Many church members have seen the scholars of our church in disarray and argue that if the theologians cannot come to decisions, how can they, as common laymen, ever hope to find the Truth of God. When examined this argument is found to be spurious, for we have been counseled that the common man, led by the Holy Spirit, is more likely to come to an understanding of the truth than is the theologian.

The Bible with its precious gems of truth was not written for the scholar alone. On the contrary, it was designed for the common people; and the interpretation given by the common people, when aided by the Holy Spirit accords best with the truth as it is in Jesus. (5T 331).

This statement of inspiration specifically dispels the view that our theologians are the ones best able to understand truth.

Yet often, forgetting that it is the theologians who have generated the confusion, we turn to them to solve the problems which they created. Far better to turn to those whom God declares to possess the better understanding of God's Word, the common people. Yet how often do we deign to include these people in our discussions upon doctrinal matters? Rather we search far and wide for those "scholars" God declares to be less knowledgeable. It is little wonder we have such doctrinal uncertainty.

But many of God's precious people are confused, uncertain, disheartened and frequently give up, assuming that if there is no certainty among those who are the leaders in the church, then these areas of doctrine cannot be important and need to be laid aside until the church comes to a decision. In some cases they are encouraged in this thinking. They are sometimes warned not to become embroiled in a dialogue on these issues, because the church has not come to a final consensus. Therefore they should not press their study or their views upon other members.

The perceptive pastor has already observed that in those areas where plurality of doctrine has been encouraged within our church, it has become increasingly unpopular to preach that view which is true, while the unscriptural view is promoted and favored. Undoubtedly the prime example is the doctrine of the human nature of Christ. While we have been told that both the pre-Fall and the post-Fall human nature is acceptable "truth" in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, yet in countries as far apart as England and Australia many of our fellow ministers have tacitly banned the preaching of the only view found in Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy. Thus men teaching the Augustinian error that Christ had the nature of Adam before he fell are often brought from overseas for official church programs while every effort is made to silence those pastors who would raise their voices to proclaim that which for almost a hundred years the

Seventh-day Adventists knew to be Bible truth. Thus the concept of pluralism when applied to established church doctrine, at its base, is not simply an effort to be even-handed concerning two diametrically opposed views, but is a not too subtle means of displacing truth and substituting error in its place. This is done without the necessity of first declaring established truth to be error.

The drive towards pluralism is unquestionably Satan-inspired. It is particularly strong in the church in the Western world. Frequently the understanding of truth is far better in Third World countries. Often it is thought to be open and tolerant to avoid hard and fast viewpoints. But the Word of God is true, unequivocal, and beyond eclecticism. The evidence is so clear that when the church loses the distinctiveness of its message, it loses its power and its attractiveness to its members and its ability to attract new members.

It has been shown that at least four conditions cause stagnation in the churches:

- (1) The eroding of doctrinal positions.
- (2) The loss of distinctive beliefs and truths.
- (3) The restructuring of church organization.
- (4) The lack of standards and a distinctive life style.

It must be recognized that all these problems had a strong impact upon our church in recent years and their effect has been to virtually stall the progress of the church in First-World countries. In countries where these issues have yet to make a dominant impact, the church continues to flourish.

Thus this drive towards pluralism is one of the reasons why the church is faltering in the Western world. Why would anyone want to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church just to worship on Sabbath? If that was the only difference from that of the Evangelicals, then one could join the Seventh-day Baptists with equal satisfaction. Surely the time has come to preach the distinctive doctrines of the Adventist faith with unprecedented

power and directness. The response among believers and non-believers alike will be greater and the unity of the Church will be achieved, not in consensus and not in compromise, but in the purity of the Bible faith.

## Chapter 9

# RELATIVISM

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**T**he inroads of pluralism have opened the door to the companion error of relativism. For many Seventh-day Adventists, the absolutes are so effectively eroded that it is well nigh impossible for them to think in terms other than the relative. Like so many errors, relativism has essential elements of truth. It is true that the message to be presented to the world must be a message that is relevant to contemporary needs. But as Seventh-day Adventists, we do not have to guess as to the content of the relevant message for today, for it is clearly outlined for us in the words of inspiration. As stated before, the final message to go to every nation, kindred, tongue and people is the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12, strengthened by the loud cry of Revelation 18:1-5.

It has become more and more fashionable to preach the clear testimony of inspiration in a comparative, or relative, sense. The concept of relativism is deeply embedded within the issues of situational ethics. The concept of situational ethics declares that the situation is the arbiter of right and truth. Therefore there are no universal laws, no principles that apply to every person in every circumstance. In the 1950s and 60s the philosophy of situational ethics gained tremendous impetus. Of course situational ethics has been a philosophy for many years, and tragically, throughout history, most people have responded according to circumstances rather than to the universal law of God.

The situational-ethics controversy reached a peak in the much publicized debate between Professor Joseph Fletcher, then

visiting professor in Medical Ethics of the University of Virginia, and professor of the Episcopal Theological School affiliated with Harvard University on the one hand, and Doctor John Warwick Montgomery, then professor and chairman of the Division of Church History and the History of Christian Thought at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois, on the other. The debate took place at San Diego's State College on February 11, 1971. During the debate, Professor Fletcher made such statements as

None of the ten commandments represents a normative principle for human conduct which is intrinsically valid or universally obliging, regardless of the circumstances. For example, in some situations, theft is the right thing to do; in other situations, respect for the property of others is the right way to act. (*Situational Ethics* Bethany Fellowship Inc., 1972).

He further said:

I think there are no normative moral principles whatsoever that are intrinsically valid or universally obliging....Whether we ought to follow a moral principle or not would, I contend, always depend upon the situation....If we were...obliged in conscience sometimes to tell white lies, as we often call them, then in conscience we might be obliged sometimes to engage in white thefts, white fornications, white killings, white breaking of promises and the like. (*Ibid.* 15).

And then, just to summarize what he saw as the principles of situationism he wrote,

Love is the summum bonum, the highest good, and first order value, the primary consideration to which in every act so far as we have the opportunity and the ability to make a rational analysis, we should be prepared "in the crunch" to sidetrack or subordinate other value

considerations of right and wrong, and good and evil, desirable and undesirable. (*Ibid.*, 17).

Fletcher saw three options for moral behavior:

1. Antinomianism, which in its simplest definition is love without law.
2. Legalism, law without love
3. Situationism, which he sees as the acme of rational behavior.

We eagerly looked for the antagonist of situational ethics, John Warwick Montgomery, to have the definitive answer to the shallow claims of Fletcher. But we were staggered to note just the opposite. Montgomery even said:

As to the specific questions, 'Must one never lie? Must one never kill a tyrant? Must one never be an instrument in an abortion?', the answer is, in terms of what is right: 'No, one must not tell lies; one must not kill other people; one must not abort.' Now, if you're saying, will you then, under no circumstances do these things?' My answer to this is the same answer that Doctor May gave: 'It may be that I am forced to do this, but if so, I am still committing wrong' (*Ibid.*, 50, 51).

Therefore, Fletcher and Montgomery agreed that we may sometimes have to break God's law. The only difference between them was that one said it is wrong to break the law, while the other one said it was morally good to break the law if circumstances dictate that to be the best (or least unacceptable) behavior.

Of course, the situationist offers all sorts of examples. One of these is the sinking boat, with insufficient accommodation in the life-boats for the passengers on board. The situationist says that it is moral to sweep away those who may be swimming to the lifeboat preventing it from being excessively loaded, so that those on the boat may be able to survive. During World War II, this whole issue was answered in one of the most moving ways by a priest, a rabbi and a Protestant minister who, rather than

sweeping aside those who were desperately trying to cling to the boat, gave up their own seats. History records that these men were last seen holding hands as they themselves rendered up their lives so that others might live. This supreme sacrifice is recorded on a United States postage stamp. Others talk of the rightness of telling a lie to hide someone who would otherwise be put to death by an enemy. And so the situations could be expanded.

One can readily understand this thinking by secular man, and cannot gainsay the rationality of the arguments. But the Scripture has a different answer, one which by faith and trust the truly converted Christian will take hold of.

There hath no temptation [test or trial] taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted [tested or tried] above that ye are able [above your endurance]; but will with the temptation [test or trial] make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (I Cor. 10:13).

Here God has promised an entirely different answer for the man whose faith and trust are in Him. Whereas the secularist and the atheist may have to resort to all sorts of deception and deviousness to interpret and handle difficult situations, the same is not true of the follower of God. The very faithfulness of God is predicated upon the Lord Himself taking control of the situation. There is, if we understand this text aright, no circumstance by which it becomes necessary for the Christian to break the inviolate moral law of God. God does not permit the Christian to be placed in a "no win" situation. This does not mean that "impossible" situations will not arise, but God is a God of the impossible.

Some years ago we heard a most moving story of a woman who, in 1972 in East Germany, made a supreme decision to obey God's law. She refused to send her eight year old daughter to school on Sabbath. The authorities, after persuasion failed, in-



formed her that if she persisted in this action, her daughter would be taken where she would be forced to attend school on the Sabbath. The faithful woman prayed that somehow God would over-rule and her daughter would not be taken away, but the day came when the authorities removed the daughter. Situational ethics would have dictated that the mother send her daughter to school and that she do everything she could to teach her of the sanctity of the Sabbath. But this woman allowed herself no compromise.

One might ask, "Why did not God answer such a prayer?" The answer soon became apparent. In good communist fashion, notices were placed around the village declaring this lady to be an unfit mother and asserting this "fact" as the reason why the daughter had been removed from the mother's care. When the villagers read this claim, they rose up in open revolt against their communist leaders. They declared that she was not an unfit mother, but one of the finest mothers in the village and they demanded that the daughter be sent back. When the officials refused this demand the villagers did the unthinkable—they declared that there would be no more work in the village until the daughter was returned to her mother. Eventually under pressure, the daughter was returned. How precious must have been I Corinthians 10:13 to this mother! God had given her a supreme test and she had passed that test.

But today the values of so many Christians have changed to the point where they would rather compromise than trust the sure word of God. Indeed God had a better way than just keeping the officials from her door. Rather, God gave a wonderful ministry of witness through this woman to every member of the village in which she lived.

Relativism, as expressed in situational ethics, is becoming rampant in the Adventist Church. We've just mentioned one situation concerning Sabbath observance. Indeed where the pressure is strong, significant numbers of Adventists yield to the

demands of the state and send their children to school on Sabbath even when no state punishment is likely. This is the response of situational ethics. It is situational ethics which led many in China to work on Sabbath and go to church on Sunday because of the working conditions in the communes. We have difficulties today, even at the General Conference level, to have strong statements on Sabbath observance voted, for there are so many who no longer see the Sabbath as part of the character of God. How we must admire those who refuse to send their children to school on Sabbath and those in China who refuse to work on the Sabbath! Such have formed their own communes and work from Sunday through to Friday. But always these are the exceptions rather than the general practice. No wonder the Lord said:

When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith in the earth? (Luke 18:8)

Situationism is seen under many circumstances in the Adventist Church of the Western world. Multitudes of Adventists think nothing of eating in public restaurants on Sabbath, nor in spending the afternoon hours of the Sabbath in pleasure unrelated to the Sabbath rest. The opportunity is lost to be drawn closer to the Lord as we understand and witness His truth to men and women at this most critical time of the end of the world's history. We see this relativism related to dress, with more and more jewelry and worldliness in dress sweeping into the church.

Often we hear the statement, "Times have changed." But in reality the law of God is being violated. The onrush of entertainment, whether it be through the film media, the music media, or sports and the like are now an engrossing part of the life of most Seventh-day Adventists within the Western world. Society at large would be excused for wondering whether we are the people that God had called in these last momentous hours of earth's history to take His message to every nation,

kindred, tongue and people. The all-consuming passions of our lives are no longer a knowledge of the Word of God, victory over sin and the sharing of the glorious message of salvation with those whom the Lord places in the sphere of our influence. The church has become relative to the world. Therefore, because we often appear a little better than the world, we sink into a satisfied state of Laodicean deception.

This relativism has come in relationship to the Spirit of Prophecy where a false division is made between universal and local prophets. Ellen White is held to be a local prophet by many. Her messages are said to be limited to the time in which she lived. Therefore they have no direct significance for today.

The ultimate relativism has come in the understanding of perfection. This word has become anathema in the minds of many. Even many preachers believe that neither the Bible nor the Spirit of Prophecy teaches that God has the power to give victory over every wrong thought, word and action. Thus the pervading message heard by congregations is a message of "sin and live." "We will continue to sin until Jesus comes," it is asserted. No one argues that we should not strive to live a more righteous life, that we should not grow in sanctification, but there is a denial of the power of the gospel. Clear statements of inspiration have been turned aside.

Let no one say, I cannot remedy my defects of character. If you come to this decision, you will certainly fail of obtaining eternal life. (COL 331).

The problems of situational ethics can be summarized as follows:

1. To say that love is the only absolute is to deny that love is expressed in the keeping of God's law, (John 14:15, 21).
2. Both the individual and society suffer greatly when immutables are removed. Without the security of absolutes, man wanders in a maze of uncertainty, which produces further frustration and failure. Men and women become ships without

rudders.

3. If we say the end justifies the means, we face the dilemma of whether or not we can always know what the end will be before pursuing a course of action. If we are confronted by a situation where the end is not clear, then the situationist is faced with the uncertainty of not knowing what action would be best in the circumstance. Often our reactions have to be made so suddenly and so spontaneously that we do not have time to consider what might be the consequences of the action.

4. Only those who have habituated a pattern of life upon the immutable principles of God's law will, in unplanned circumstances, respond in a manner consistent with the moral code of God.

5. If there are times when the best good is served by deception, we face a dilemma of not being able to believe or trust the situationists. Love is the very essence of the character of God. And God cannot lie.

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him (I John 4:16).

6. The love of God is unchangeable and is manifested in God's law. Thus it is foolishness to postulate that agape love can be upheld as the first-order value, the only absolute, while, in contradistinction to the very nature of this love, we attempt to use it to annul the immutable law of God.

7. If the end justifies the means, who determines what is the best end or the evil end? Surely this dilemma ultimately leads to egocentricity as man is predisposed to seek those ends which he perceives as best for himself, rather than for others.

✓ Throughout the Scriptures the answer to conflicting situations is an implicit trust in God. These principles are demonstrated over and over again in the Word of God. For example, the Red Sea experience of the children of Israel, the experience of Kings Hezekiah and Sennacherib, the experience of

Daniel in the lion's den or of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace all demonstrate that God always provides a solution to these apparent dilemmas.

As ministers it is our beholden duty to lead our flocks into an implicit trust in our heavenly Father who, in infinite wisdom, will lead us in the paths of rectitude irrespective of the circumstances prevailing. No man or woman will ever be fitted to pass through the time of trouble who has adopted a philosophy which chooses responses by a relative standard. Situationists would have an entirely different answer from the answers that were discovered in these circumstances. God is looking for a ministry and a people to whom situationism and relativism are anathema.

## Chapter 10

# EXISTENTIALISM

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**J**ust as relativism arises out of pluralism, so existentialism is intrinsically involved in relativism. It is usually suggested that the Danish theological philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard was the formulator of modern existentialism in the first part of the nineteenth century. This revolutionary figure in Protestant history has done much to affect the thinking of many modern-day Christians. Kierkegaard's preoccupation with the significance of the subjective has led to an increasing emphasis upon the primacy of the person in the determination of morality and truth. Some have suggested that "Christian" existentialism encompasses the noble concepts of man's personal relationship with God. While this idea is sometimes expressed, the mainline thrust of "Christian" existentialism is away from the claims of God's eternal law upon human life.

For untold generations, Christianity had held unitedly to the immutability of the law of God as the basis of truth and morality. Thus right and wrong tended to be clearly defined and the parameters of acceptable behavior were early taught in the life of the person. In the nineteenth century, however, there was a marked shift away from belief in the immutables of God to reliance upon social mores. Nevertheless, even at this level of behavior, there was the tendency for society to remain reasonably well intact and for morality similar to that enunciated in the Word of God to be retained. But the seed of disregard of God's great moral law had been sown. Thus in the latter part of the twentieth century, the dominant mores have been existential

ones, in which the person becomes his own measure of right and wrong, of truth and error. In more recent times, these existential concepts are exemplified by such dictums as "Do your own thing!" "Be yourself!" "Have fun!" This has left us with a generation who, in a large measure, have few parameters of life. Members of this generation have no clear understanding of acceptable and profitable behavior, and therefore have become open to all kinds of theories, philosophies, and theologies in a desperate and unsuccessful attempt to put meaning back into life.

As Seventh-day Adventists we have not been immune to this existential thrust. Even in our own schools we have increasingly tended to place the emphasis upon the ideas, the feelings, and the individual preferences of our children, rather than to explain to them the truth in a clear, concise and logical way. Each idea has been considered to have merit, and the emphasis has been upon student participation, rather than on a serious and fruitful search for truth that will become the basis of adult life. Thus, many of our own children are like blades of grass tossed to and fro by every doctrinal breeze that blows.

Often existentialism is clothed in the idealistic concepts of love and respect for the person and his rights. It has become more and more popular to assume that each person has a right to his own viewpoints. There is an essence of truth in this in the fact that God coerces no man and allows each one the freedom of the will to make his choices. Unfortunately, this concept is often pushed further to suggest that each person's opinions or concepts have equal merit. Indeed, the merit of ideas can be determined only in the spotlight of the Law and Word of God. Those ideas which are consistent with the revelation of the Eternal alone are concepts of value. All other concepts are valueless irrespective of the linguistic skills in which they have been couched, or the titillating stimulation of the intellect which they elicit.

We cannot over-emphasize the fact that Christ alone is the

source of all truth. Jesus declared to Pilate that the purpose for His coming to this world was that He should bear witness to the truth. (John 18:37). All other notions bear the mark of error.

Existentialism has found very strong expression in the halls of academia, where the demands for academic freedom have penetrated far beyond the secular and eclectic institutions of the state. It has become a common fact of life that teachers in Christian, and even Seventh-day Adventist, institutions have joined the ranks of so-called "freedom-seekers." Yet truly Christian schools will have well-defined religious goals and practices which do not allow for the unlimited or even wide-ranging differences in content presented by their teachers.

Most claims for academic freedom focus upon the perception of the teacher to his right to teach according to his professional understandings and convictions. Little is said normally about the freedom of the operating organization to preserve its right to maintain the integrity of the purpose for which the institution was founded. The issue of fundamental rights is frequently the basis of disagreement, if not serious tension, between faculty and boards.

The fundamental basis of Seventh-day Adventism is that truth resides in, or at least is always consistent with, the Word of God, and, in its fullest sense, truth resides in a person--Jesus Christ. This concept immediately defines limits for the pursuit of truth. The search for that which is clearly inconsistent with the teachings of Christ is perceived as a pursuit of error rather than truth. But to the existentialist, truth resides in each individual. Thus we face such statements as,

Academic freedom is the principle designed to protect the teacher from hazards that tend to prevent him from meeting his obligation in the pursuit of truth. (W.T. Couch, Quoted in Russell, Kirk, *Academic Freedom*, Henry Regency Co., 1955).

Not only is Couch's definition wholly existential, but it fails



to address the most pressing issue as to whether the teacher has the right to indoctrinate the youth in his classes with *his* ideas of truth. If academic freedom presupposes the unlimited right of the teacher to indoctrinate the students with his concepts of truth, then it is obvious that much error will be presented. In existentialism, there are no immutables, no universals by which the teacher or student can evaluate the quality and value of any of the presuppositions or concepts presented and even worse, perpetuated.

It certainly should not be urged that academic freedom is necessary for the pursuit of truth. Rather, man requires a paradigm outside and infinitely beyond himself by which to evaluate and to find truth. For Seventh-day Adventists, this rule of faith is unquestionably the Word of God. Sister White has said:

The Bible is not to be tested by men's ideas of science, but science is to be brought to the test of the unerring standard.(CT. 425).

A careful analysis of the existential trap shows that "academic freedom" is needed, not for the pursuit of truth, but rather as a concept for the pursuit of error. In the garden of Eden, Satan based his appeal to Eve on the premise that she would achieve a freedom as yet unknown to her simply by accepting the deceptive error that he propounded as truth. So today, strong supporters have seen agitation for academic freedom as a necessity for the toleration of error.

All justification for intellectual freedom rests upon a conception of the nature of truth which implies a reason for tolerating error." (Walter P. Metzger, *Academic Freedom in the Age of the Universe*, Columbia Union Press, 1969, pg. 90).

True Christians have long held that there can be no toleration of error, making a clear distinction between the toleration of the one in error and the intolerance of the error itself. Many

lose much by failing to acknowledge or make this distinction. Further, Metzger offers a rationale for academic freedom which is not built upon faith or trust in God and His Word, and while many of the values are praiseworthy in themselves, they fail to be secured by a transcendent value system.

Finally, the rationale for academic freedom has been endowed with certain fundamental values.... Such values are tolerance and honesty, publicity and testifiability, individuality and co-operativeness, having part of the scientific bequest. (*Ibid* 91,92).

There is another issue involved in the modern concept of academic freedom which should be of more than passing concern to basic Christians. The concept of academic freedom as pursued in modern educational circles has an indisputable link with the development of evolutionary concepts of science. While acknowledging that there is nothing new under the sun, Metzger concludes that academic freedom

...grew out of the Darwinian debate...science invested the theory of academic freedom with a special conception of truth and a formula for tolerating error.... Without the canons of evolutionary science, we contend, the modern rationale of academic freedom would not exist." (*Ibid* 89)

One of the most frequent and persistent attacks on Seventh-day Adventist colleges is that they are resistant to change and therefore are repressive of the legitimate search for truth. It is our observation that, on the contrary, Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions have been far too open to change in the areas of doctrine and Christian practice. If indeed we recognize that the message of God is changeless, then the only variations that we will see in the academic arena will be those that do not infringe upon the purity of truth or of Christian practice. It has been instructive for us to note that not always do those who demand the privilege of presenting their own concepts of truth

to their students, have the same degree of openness to those students who would seek to present concepts loyal to the Word of God. It is much easier to claim existential rights for oneself than to accept these as rights of others.

We are in an age when Christian educators and administrators face a constant pressure to erode truth and standards, all in the name of academic and personal freedom. Such efforts ignore Christ's declaration that

...the truth shall make you free (John 8:32).



The treacherous results of freedom criers can be seen in the erosion of truth as observed in every God-centered-movement from the time of Creation. These freedom cries are based upon the fundamental error that freedom will lead to truth, while Christ clearly declares that the reverse is true: truth will lead to freedom.

Like all forms of existentialism, the call for academic freedom, at its roots, is primarily motivated by self-interest rather than by a love for God's church and His truth. The cry for academic freedom is generated by those who would deny parents' freedom to have their children receive an education based upon the stated principles of the institution into which they have entrusted their children and for which they have made many financial sacrifices. Many professors deny their students freedom to learn Seventh-day Adventist principles untrammelled by doubt and innuendoes. They further deny the employing institution the right to pursue the aims inherent in its establishment. This is tyranny of the worst form for it usurps the freedom for the professor at the expense of those who have a God-given right to exert it. Much of that which masquerades as academic freedom is in fact, when unmasked, academic coercion. (See *Adventism Imperiled* by the same authors.)

While we can agree with the existentialist protest against views of the world and policies of action in which the individual human being is regarded as the hapless victim of his-

torical forces, or as the pawn of his environment, nevertheless, the existential model is a model that is far more humanistic than Christian. That such a model has found significant receptivity within the ranks of Seventh-day Adventist ministers is surely reason for the greatest level of alarm. Seventh-day Adventists have a responsibility as never before to preach the unchanging law of God and the all-sufficiency of His Word as the only basis upon which doctrine and Christian practice can achieve authenticity in the life of the child of God.

Beyond the classroom, God's shepherds must also examine their own preaching roles. Do we uplift our own concepts, views conceived by mere earthen vessels, while ignoring the messages of the Almighty in whose hands our every breath resides? Our flocks deserve better than this. Yet many of us are careless in this matter. It is far from a rarity to listen to sermons where not a single word of Scripture is cited or where only brief reference is made to God's Word before a presentation of personal philosophy. Such sermons are worthless and unworthy of the high duty to which we are called.

## Chapter 11

# HUMANISM

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**T**he humanistic movement, with its roots in Greek and earlier pagan philosophy, found its revival in the fifteenth century and has had its most recent resurgence in the twentieth century. One cannot deny that humanism, from a cursory evaluation, upholds noble and attractive goals. It underlies many movements in society which seek to preserve the dignity of man and to protect him against abuses by tyrannical forces. We cannot disagree with such goals. It has had implications in the trade-union movement, in the civil-rights movement, in the equal-rights movement, in the amnesty-international movement and in many other movements which have had at least, in part, laudable goals and have achieved many worthwhile ends.

In many ways humanism has been a reaction against those concepts of former generations where millions of oppressed individuals have been forced to abandon the value of life here and now and to look only to the eternal life as an answer to their poverty, misery, oppression and persecution. However, humanism, swinging to the other extreme, ignores the ultimacy of eternity and measures man by himself. In doing so it replaces one evil with another. It has been the harbinger of evolutionary concepts contending that man has the ability to lift himself from the pit of abject wretchedness to an elevated status where love, unity, and harmony reign. Humanism gives false hope by proclaiming the view that man is able to eliminate all the injustices and inequities that we see in the world today. It is ironic to recognize that the Greeks, who propounded this highly elevated

view of man, at the same time had a society built upon oppressive slavery.

✓ Humanism is frequently linked with socialistic concepts, and concepts of dialectic materialism which, it is hoped, will somehow transform the world and inaugurate a new age in which peace, safety, harmony, good-will, love, and human brotherhood will reign indisputably and without challenge within the world.

✓ The humanist sees education as his major tool and therefore, with great vigor, these concepts have been infiltrated into the minds of man. The tragedy is that the hope that they engender is a false hope, for at the heart of man is his own degeneracy, his own self-centeredness which will, outside the power of Christ, never permit these goals to be achieved.

Basic to humanism is the Greek, pagan philosophy of the innate goodness of man, a concept for which Socrates was willing to die. Socrates popularized the dictum, "To know is to do," believing that through education we can achieve the fullness of the goodness inherently within man. Throughout the generations of the world, this false view has frequently been resurrected. Jean Jacques Rousseau, the renowned eighteenth-century French philosopher, gave great impetus to the humanistic movement through his novel *Emile*, in which he espoused the concept that a good environment alone would permit the goodness in man to develop. We saw the same humanistic thrust in the universal education movement of last the century where it was confidently predicted that by education we could solve all the major social ills, such as poverty, crime, and mental illness. Indeed, there were those who boldly proclaimed that education would permit us to close our prisons, our poorhouses, and our psychiatric hospitals.

We stand at the end of the twentieth century much wiser on these matters. Indeed we have seen an escalation of crime and mental illness, even in the First World countries, and poverty

has been anything but eliminated. Neither have we been able to eliminate the injustices in the world. Indeed, not only have also we seen the terrible Jewish holocaust of the Second World War, but we have seen terrible carnage of life in places such as Cambodia, Iran and Uganda. Yet the optimism of humanity reigns supreme and there is still the expectation that man, through his own efforts and in his own strength, can provide the solutions that will bring in the ultimate utopia whereby eternal harmony will be achieved.

The term *Christian humanism* is a contradiction of terms, for there is no way in which we can take the man-focused concepts of humanism and marry them to the God-centered realities of Christianity. One is built upon the transient limitations of man, and the other upon the eternal omnipotence of God. The one places man at the center of focus; the other centers on the reality of God and Christ. One presumes to see man as the measure of all things; the other accepts that

...without me ye can do nothing. (John 15:5).

But with God, all things are possible. (Matt. 19:26).

Christianity centers upon the reality that Christ is the answer, not only to man's eternal destiny, but also for the viability and fruitfulness of his life here and now. It falls neither into the error of making this life the be-all and end-all of existence, nor of accepting the opposite extreme that this life is meaningless. Rather, true Christianity sees this life as part of the eternal life with an education which begins now and extends throughout the eons of eternity.

Yet we would not be honest if we did not recognize that the influence of humanism has made its mark upon Christianity and indeed has invaded the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Humanism naturally favors concepts such as existentialism, pluralism, and relativism. It emphasizes the primacy of the individual to a point where truth becomes subservient and no-

tions of right and wrong are subjected to the "higher" goal of achieving the good of the individual. Thus the emphasis is upon love, forgiveness, and tolerance, while truth and the vindication of the character of God are all but ignored. Within humanism are the unmistakable seeds of antinomianism. This surely will be the basis of the great deception of Satan at the end of time where he will speak words of love and of human compassion, where he will work miracles of great good to the extent that all except those whose names are enshrined in the Lamb's Book of Life will be deceived. It is hard to see a movement that is more effectively preparing the way for these satanic delusions than the humanist movement as it makes its inevitable encroachment upon the church of God.

One of the most blatant forms of contemporary humanism is the New Age Movement which has all but taken over the motivational training of U.S. industry and commerce. The New Age links humanism with paganism, eastern mysticism and spiritism. What alarms us most is that tens of thousands of dollars have been expended by Seventh-day Adventist institutions to use these Satan-inspired deceptions for the training of their workers.

It is certainly humanistic thinking which characterizes Laodicea, the final church--a church that believes that it is rich and increased with goods and has need of nothing. To many this abundance will be seen as the blessing of God. The Church is largely oblivious to the fact that it is wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. (Rev. 3:17). As the faithful ministers present the straight testimony of the True Witness to Laodicea specifically warning against the sins of the people, these messengers are seen as unloving and unkind, thus bringing forth the condemnation and wrath of many of the hearers so that they rise up against these God-sent messengers who would dare to attempt to awaken Laodicea out of her sleep.

We also see this humanism in many of the programs of the



church. Nothing more characterizes it to our minds than the concepts of the church-growth movement. It is incomprehensible to us that the Seventh-day Adventist Church could follow the churches of the world in this matter. The church growth movement has its origin in the traditional churches with their declining enrollments. It is a desperate humanistic effort to try to shore up the flagging attendances and contributions in these churches. It is disturbing to read that spokesmen from these declining churches have been used widely around the Adventist circuit in an endeavor to resurrect the flagging impact of the Adventist message in North America.

Such movements depend strongly upon secular psychological principles, rather than upon the power of the Holy Spirit. They lean upon the arm of flesh, rather than upon the arm of the Lord. It seems inconceivable that a people who believe that in the last days the power of the Holy Spirit will be poured out in latter-rain abundance upon His people, would resort to the same devices of humanism used by fallen churches in an endeavor to stimulate diminishing attendance and enthusiasm for God's church.

Rather, this is a time when God's ministers need to be focusing upon the preparation of their own lives for the reception of the Holy Spirit and also in preparing the membership of the church for this power. It is indeed a sure sign of the lack of the power of the Spirit of God in the church that leads us to move into such programs as church-growth. Surely it is a denial of the God-given origin of our movement and the power of the God of heaven, to resort to such an unscriptural tactic.

We would suggest to ministers who wish to understand God's methods for church growth that they prayerfully study the books *Gospel Workers* and *Evangelism*. Here will be found no false methods but those alone ordained of God.

There have been instances where God's church has paid outrageous fees to those not of our faith to conduct church-growth

seminars for our ministers. The very sums demanded are a certain warning sign testifying to the avarice of the lecturer, a certain warning sign. To engage such persons is to aid and abet the sin of simony, which is the act of buying or selling ecclesiastical preferment. Often these men have represented denominations with alarming declines in their own memberships, thus indicating the ineffectiveness of their methods.

Another area of concern is the program of the caring church. Unlike the church-growth movement, there are elements of the caring-church program which are consistent with biblical principles. However, it is a torturing experience to realize that when any organization has to declare itself to be something, it is an almost certain indication that it is not what it claims. Thus it is that the autocratic governments of the world often declare themselves to be people's republics, or liberation governments, or democratic governments.

At the General Conference session of 1985 in New Orleans, the North American Division proudly proclaimed itself as the caring church. Yet at that session five of its own members were arrested and taken to the local lockup simply for expressing their concern for the trying conditions prevailing in certain Eastern-bloc countries where Seventh-day Adventists have been persecuted for their faith. The authors, with a few others, were privileged to be able to assist these persons in their plight, but we saw no evidence whatsoever of a general caring spirit by their fellow brethren and sisters within the North American Division.

If indeed the Adventist Church was empowered by the Holy Spirit, we would have no need to self-declare that we are the caring church. That care would be abundantly seen in the urgency with which we take the glorious message of salvation to men and women. Then no one but the most deceived persons would fail to see the power of God in His church. For all too long we have looked to programs as the way to stimulate the finishing of God's work. Maybe the time has come when God's

church should cease for a moment from designing new programs, no matter how good they are, and bring the church to its knees in prayer for repentance, reformation, revival, and full commitment to the One who alone is able to finish His work upon earth. The time has come to study Pentecost so that its principles can be applied to ready God's beloved people for the pouring out of the unprecedented power of the latter rain. /

When properly understood, humanism is the counterfeit of true love, for it elevates self while posing as the answer to the woes of others. As ministers we would do well to eschew it in its manifold manifestations.

## Chapter 12

# SECULARISM

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**O**ne of the most stirring appeals of Paul is to be found in the following words:

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:2).

Conformity is one of the greatest traps for Christianity, for conformity is the mother of compromise. With compromise comes a dearth of spirituality and a diminution of spiritual power. It is not easy in the context of Western society in particular, to avoid these drifts to worldliness. We are so used to seeing the consensus mentality in politics, in business, and in other facets of everyday life, that it is easy to use the same *modus operandi* when dealing with the verities of God. To many, consensus theology is acceptable, but it can hardly be so to those who believe in the immutables of God. The Lord always calls us to stand, sure and unmovable truth. Any deviation from this standard, is to place ourselves in the territory of Satan.

When, in 1976, the Congregational, the Methodist and the Presbyterian Churches in Australia united to form the Uniting Church of Australia, Russell was Deputy Medical Superintendent of a large Melbourne University hospital. The chaplaincy department reported to the Deputy Medical Superintendent. The senior chaplain was a Presbyterian minister. In discussion concerning the proposed fusion of his faith with the two others, he was asked how a Presbyterian believing devoutly (one

would anticipate) in the doctrine of predestination could unite with Methodists who hold the doctrine of free choice. So great had become the spirit of compromise that the senior chaplain replied, "You know, I've never given it a second thought." Sadly such carelessness in matters of doctrine has become the order of the day and smoothed the pathway to numerous soul-destroying compromises.

It is often perceived that those who are secure in the faith of God are rigid and unbending, and while malleability and cooperation are admirable characteristics in matters unrelated to God's truth, in matters pertaining to revealed truth an immovable stance is mandatory. But such is not popular today. With emphasis upon tolerance and open-mindedness, no longer is certainty seen as a positive attribute. This climate makes it easy for the church to be invaded by the world and for secular philosophies and methodologies to impinge upon the workings of the church and its institutions.

One of the most dangerous words in Christendom today is the word *relevance*. Under the guise of seeking to be relevant to the age in which we live, many have been able to introduce compromises of all kinds into the church. It is true that when we are dealing with those matters in which there is not a thus saith the Lord, we can be open to variant positions. But this flexibility cannot be so in relationship to those matters upon which the Lord of Heaven has spoken. Many see the counsel of the Bible and the spirit of Prophecy as somewhat outmoded for the present age, or, if not outmoded, needing significant modification to meet the needs of the present generation.

When the Seventh-day Adventist Church was called out in the middle of the last century, the moral standards accepted, but not necessarily always practiced by the world, were vastly closer to the law of God than exists in the permissiveness of contemporary society. Nevertheless, the church in the mid twentieth century saw the need to uphold far greater standards

than those of society in general. But, as the world has declined in moral integrity, the church has tragically shown a similar decline, until today its standards fall far short of those of mere society in the last century. Today in truth, our standards are only marginally higher than those of our present degraded society. Abominations that once were totally abhorrent to the church are condoned, and even supported. We can now hear within the church arguments in favor of masturbation, homosexuality, adultery, fornication and abortion. We have lost our will to discipline those who openly and persistently flout the principles of God, whether it be in morality, dress, Sabbath observance, entertainment or financial integrity.

Our hospitals, schools, and colleges have shown a bewildering drift towards the world. Sabbath is little different from any other day in many of our hospitals. The televisions blare out during the sacred hours, even in some waiting rooms. Staff have been observed to play sports with their patients. In many of our hospitals, abortions are undertaken routinely. It is fair to ask the question as to whether or not many of our hospitals merit the use of the term Adventist today. In our view, they do not. Step by step, they have been taken away from the church's jurisdiction. Huge percentages of the staff are non-Adventist and many of those professing to be Adventists are not practicing, or are far from practicing, the principles of Christ.

In many of our hospitals our dietary principles are daily violated. It is felt that there will be a loss of patronage to our competitors if we do not freely offer a flesh diet and in some cases caffeine beverages. Rather should we make our healthful diets a positive feature of our service which will recommend our hospitals as leaders in the fields of health and recovery.

So far has the matter of secularism developed that documented reports have been circulated of at least two of our largest hospitals serving alcohol and unclean meats at physician seminars which they have conducted.

The situation is alarming when we consider that the church has stood security for huge sums of loan and bond money. Should for any reason there be a defaulting, the church would face a crisis that would make the Davenport situation look like a midmorning snack. Some will readily argue that it cannot happen because of the amount of real estate that we own and the security that we have in our institutions. It may well be the case in the present economic situation, but should there be a dramatic change in the nation's economy, we cannot be assured of what values could be realized upon the sale of such properties.

Some suggest that because our hospitals are incorporated there can be no ascending liability, thus removing the church itself from responsibility for any debts incurred by the hospital system. We trust that this is true, but our own General Conference lawyers, after detailed study and consultations, have informed our leaders that we have no certainty of this fact. With the *Adventist Review* reporting Adventist hospital indebtedness at \$2.2 billion in 1987, up a half billion dollars in one year, the matter is most serious. The *Adventist Review* newsbreak report of July 2, 1987, was surely designed to prepare the church membership for major hospital close downs. It is our recommendation that the whole system be sold if there is still some profitability and that that profit be used to establish many small institutions outside the cities of North America after the order which God has ordained.

The tragic situation is that our institutions of health were initially designed as one of the greatest avenues for missionary service, yet persistent reports indicate that in some of our hospitals, the staff are not only discouraged, but often are also prohibited from carrying out a ministry of prayer or of true spiritual consolation to the patient that is being treated. It is true that there are still some fine experiences in some of our hospitals, especially in our overseas ministry. But more and more we sense that

our hospitals have lost the vision for which they were established. More and more we hear the pronouncement that the Adventist Church should be involved in community hospitals. Such was never the purpose of our medical work. It was rather to be an opening wedge to finish the gospel commission, especially among those of the wealthier and the secular classes. Increasingly, our hospitals function as secular institutions dominated by physicians not of our faith, without any desire to uphold the principles that God has ordained for our hospitals.

It is possibly in the schools and colleges that the most damaging effect of secularism can be seen. (Colin has spent almost twenty years in college administration and Russell in hospital administration. We full well recognize how difficult it is for leaders in such institutions to withstand the thrusts of secularism. We acknowledge our own past and present defects, but we dare not present standards lowered to our own achievements. We must present those of God.) It is not by accident that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a dynamic educational system.

We have often boasted that our school system is the second largest parochial school system in the world, second only to the Catholic system. The strength of the system is as it ought to be. Indeed, it should be much stronger than it is. Presently, we are in a period in North America of greatly declining enrollment at all levels, elementary, secondary, and tertiary. In fact, so alarming is the situation that almost every academy, and almost every college, is in some degree of financial difficulty. Some academies have already closed or have been merged. Rapidly the proportion of Adventists who are in Adventist schools is declining. Many of our young people are obtaining education outside the Adventist faith.

Recently the Director of Admissions at one of our largest institutions reported to Colin that the second most common reason given that freshmen did not return to that institution was



that they did not believe that the education they were receiving was sufficiently distinctive to warrant the expenditure that they and their parents had to make for that education. When our institutions were established, they were established to be different from the world, to be patterned upon a true, God-centered academic curriculum. They were to have a thorough work program and to offer the finest foundation for ministry experience so that every young man and woman could go forth into the world as a proven and successful worker for God. The whole purpose of our educational system was to educate young people for the work of God. Today that has changed. We have argued somewhat persuasively, that our schools should train all our young people, irrespective of the occupation that they might choose. Such was never the original purpose. While it is true that our educational institutions should be training and educating all our young people, surely the object of such education is for a single-minded assault at this end-time to complete the work of God. Therefore a preparation for service, and for receiving the power of the Holy Spirit, should be embedded within every element of the educational program. If we really believe that

...higher education is an experimental knowledge of the ✓  
plan of salvation, (CT 11)

then this purpose would be the be-all and the end-all of our education. But today, in every way, we have seen the assault of Satan, through secularism, upon our schools.

It is indisputable that the accreditation process has had its significant influence upon this trend. While it is argued that such accreditation is necessary, so that our schools may provide the opportunity for our young people to go out into service in the world, it is a complete overstatement of the situation. Many hundreds of colleges and universities in the United States have deliberately chosen to reject accreditation and some of those are

among the most prestigious institutions of the nation. But we have sought to follow the world and the world's education. We have placed emphasis too frequently upon academics ahead of spirituality. Qualifications and secular approval have meant more than a deep, Christian commitment in the hiring and firing of personnel. In turn, such professors have brought worldly concepts of education into the classroom and inculcated them into the minds of impressionable youth. These youth have then been fired with unholy ambitions and concepts rather than with ideas flowing from the pure streams of living water that God has for the final generation of His youth. Thus most leave the school system impotent to do the work that God has ordained for His people, including our ministerial graduates. Our younger ministers in particular should examine this fact and seek, by the study of God's counsels, to shed all secularism.

The effect of accreditation can be seen in the rapid development of sporting programs. It must be acknowledged that few of our colleges had gymnasiums before the Second World War. But now these have become centers of activity. The work programs have correspondingly declined. Some young people have been inspired with the idolatry of sport from that which they have gained in our own Adventist institutions. Not only have we instituted intramural sports within our schools, we have also advanced to intercollegiate sports with other Adventist institutions. Now we have expanded the sports program to interschool sports with non-Adventist institutions. How can we claim to follow the counsel of God in education and deny the clearest statements in the Spirit of Prophecy? When sports were held for one afternoon at Avondale College in April of 1900, Ellen White was shown by the angel that tennis and cricket were species of idolatry like the idols of the nations (CT 350). This secularism of our physical program is in total disobedience to every counsel that God has given.

And now we look at the issue of the curriculum. More and

more of our young men are being trained in the philosophies and the theologies of the world. It is fair to say that some of our graduates know more about the teachings of Bultmann, Barth, Bonhoeffer, Kierkegaard, Tillich, Fletcher and others, than they do about the pillars of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. Even among our ministerial graduates there are few in western countries who have a clear vision of the distinctiveness and the uniqueness of the Advent faith. Therefore our churches are perishing through lack of knowledge. Many of our preachers are preaching precious truth, but they fail to preach present truth. Many of our young men are taught a theology that is built upon the false insights of the evangelical Christians which are anathema to the Adventist faith. Because so many who enter the theological courses are young men who have recently accepted the Adventist faith, they become easy prey to the philosophies of professors who are unfaithful to their God-given responsibilities.

In the scientific sphere it must be stated that many, if not most, of our science teachers today have rejected the simple story of God's creation some 6,000 years ago. Some believe that the view that Creation week occurred approximately 6,000 years ago was the invention of Bishop Usher. But God's servant no fewer than 32 times declares that this earth was created about 6,000 years ago. In numerous other passages Sister White refers to periods of time indicating precisely the same fact. Consequently, we were alarmed to find that at one scientific session of the 1985 General Conference Ministerial pre-Council session, not one of the scientists leading out felt inclined to support these clear statements of God's servant. Since we attended the meeting, our report is not one of hearsay.

Once again these scientific doubts are pressed to the minds of youth who do not have the background to counter the "wisdom" of their professors. Even in the areas of humanities our young people are forced to read more and more of the adul-

terated writings of men in their English courses, sometimes to the point of pornography and blasphemy. In history courses, no longer do most professors teach history from the perspective of God's hand over the nations and His workings within the great movements of this earth. More and more the distinction between what is taught in our schools and that which is taught in a state university is hard to define. Is it any wonder then that there is such a crisis in enrollment? We believe that our people would be willing to pay for higher education if they knew that its source was from heaven. But why pay such high fees to learn that which is just a little different from that of secular institutions?

Now we hasten to say that there are professors in each of our colleges and in our academies and schools who do have a burden for God's way and who are seeking to bring before our young people the purity of the faith that God has given to us. And, while looking at a general trend, we do not want to be misunderstood as saying that our schools are devoid of these faithful teachers. We want to acknowledge them and to thank them for their ministry, a ministry which, at least, is saving some of our young people.

One cannot but also be alarmed at the declining standard of dress on our campuses. While it is true that dress is not the first of the reforms, it certainly is indicative of spiritual development. The modesty and simplicity of dress that God has directed for His children is frequently no longer apparent.

A person's character is judged by his style of dress. A refined taste, a cultivated mind, will be revealed in the choice of simple and appropriate attire. Chaste simplicity in dress, when united with modesty of demeanor, will go far toward surrounding a young woman with that atmosphere of sacred reserve which will be to her a shield from a thousand perils. (Ed 248).

We also see the rapidly declining standards in social rela-

tions and morality on our campuses. When we see our young people so unabashedly engaging in public displays of affection that go well beyond even that which might have been considered a few years ago appropriate in the world, it is little wonder that immorality is widespread among our young people. The moment has long passed when each of us as pastors and church leaders should rise up and cry aloud against the prevailing secularization of our church and its institutions. Some of us feel that to point out these matters is an act of disloyalty to God's church. Others, in all honesty, fear that their upward mobility will be halted if they take unpopular stances. But God provides us with no such excuses for our silence in the face of evident apostasy. We would urge our men to hold the fort, fearing rather God's displeasure than man's.

Surely the time has come for a total reformation. God has promised that if his people

...will listen to His voice and follow in His ways, God will correct and enlighten them, and bring them back to their upright position of distinction from the world. (6T 145).

It will take the full commitment of the whole church, laity, ministry, health workers and teachers alike for this result to be achieved. It can occur only when we earnestly search out God's way and in His strength determine to follow Him, irrespective of the consequences. The finishing of God's work, the coming of the King, all are predicated upon this commitment taking place. There is no more pressing need in God's Church today than educational reform. No matter how torturing it is, no matter how much opposition it engenders, it is a nonoptional requirement if we are determined to permit God to finish His work through us.

## Chapter 13

# HEDONISM

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**B**oth of us have recollections of the first time a Hollywood-type production was shown at our church social. So vivid indeed is our recollection, that we can remember in broad detail the plot of the film. It was shortly after the Second World War had terminated, and by modern standards, the theme and depiction of the film would not raise serious question. A flood-door however, had been opened. We well remember one brief scene where kissing took place in which the picture was blocked by the projectionist. We also remember the projectionist placing his hand over the commencement of the film so that we could not see the apparently well-known Hollywood company that no doubt produced it.

Today in many churches and institutions, such films, and others of much less merit, have become routine entertainment for our children and youth as well as for adults. Colin remembers some years ago being alarmed when he saw that the projected Saturday evening entertainment for the Adventist Church in a large city in Australia included television singers, country and western singers, films, and other similar items. On protesting to the conference leaders, he was told that if such entertainment was not offered to our young people, they would instead attend the movie-houses and discotheques of the city. Colin's question was, "Isn't the situation rather, that we are actually developing a taste for this worldly entertainment in the minds of our young people?"

( The whole history of pleasure-seeking has its roots in pagan-

ism. It certainly can be traced back to the concept of the sophists of Greece who saw a certain ultimacy in pleasure-seeking as a desirable way of life. Even in the fundamental beliefs of the American way of life is etched the "pursuit of happiness." Such has always intrigued us as non-Americans, for surely happiness is not something that is pursued, but is rather the result of a fruitful and productive life pattern. The pursuit of happiness results from discontentment and a lack of fulfillment in life.

Not long ago an article pointed out that a hundred years or so ago Americans averaged one hour of entertainment per week. Today Americans average about 40 hours of entertainment per week. This figure includes television, radio, records and audio tapes, opera, video, video-games, movie-houses, ballet and sporting events. Few have stopped to consider the tremendous sociological, physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual effects of this dramatic change in life-style patterns. Indeed, so ingrained are these entertainment phenomena within the thinking of modern man, that it would be considered by most totally incomprehensible that they would be profited by living without such entertainment.

The majority of Christians follow a life style little different from that of the world, and tragically many Seventh-day Adventists also have an entertainment obsession not too different from that of the worldling. The entertainment syndrome has assaulted the very stability of the individual, the family, and the church. It has affected the sociological patterns of interpersonal relationships and unquestionably has fed the egocentric motivation natural to every human being.

We first became interested in the entertainment syndrome when the singing group, the Beatles, arrived in Australia about 1962. We saw clips of their arrival on television news broadcasts. The emotional response of the thousands of young people at KingsfordSmith International Airport in Sydney was staggering. Very quickly ambulances came to take away the scores of

youth who had collapsed from excitement prostration. While many were permitted to go home from the area hospitals within a few hours, quite a number were hospitalized for days before they could be considered to have recovered sufficiently to be released. Such emotional reactions are still uncommon, as today's entertainment far exceeds that of the Beatles in its extremity, and its impact upon the physiology of the body.

Entertainment acts in a manner very similar to certain drugs. The body responds to excitement through the sympathetic nervous system. Various biological changes then take place. These include an increase in breathing and heart rate, the inhibition of digestive processes and the secretion of adrenalin into the blood system. Like drug induced emotional "highs", with the passage of time, the "high" does not return to normality, but to well below the normal level of emotional equilibrium. The result is depression. The person then needs another "dose" of entertainment to reach the high. Unfortunately, like all forms of drugs, the body adapts to entertainment levels. Thus it is necessary as time proceeds, to increase the frequency of entertainment, and to increase the duration of it. We have seen the predictable direction from soft-rock to hard-rock to punk-rock to acid-rock and to heavy-metal. As more of our children and youth are experiencing life vicariously rather than through their self-initiated experiences, they are being drawn deeper into psychological and emotional problems, and further away from spiritual and intellectual pursuits. No age in the history of the world has had such opportunity for hedonistic idolatry.

As a church we have often blindly followed the patterns of the world unthinkingly and irresponsibly. As the world has increased its worship at the altar of amusements, we have increased the amusements that we have made available to our children and youth. We have thought that by doing so, we would keep the young from the world, but indeed, what we have done is to expose them to that which the world can much



more effectively offer. We give them a taste for Satan's deceptions and they are soon ensnared by them. The young people seek more highly polished entertainment outside of the church. Our youth are not foolish. They see the inconsistency of, on the one hand, admonishing them not to attend the movies, while on the other hand, bringing these movies into the social halls of our churches. They see the inconsistency in admonishing them not to get involved in competitive sports with other schools, while on the other hand setting up elaborate intramural programs within our own schools. They see the inconsistency of admonishing them not to partake of worldly music while bringing so-called contemporary music into our churches. Is it any wonder that they quickly lose faith in adult judgment and in a value system that is so poorly presented before them?

Sincere Adventist parents today face a terrible dilemma: they want to be supportive of God's church, they want to be nonjudgmental of the activities sponsored by the church, and yet they also want to protect their young people against the evils that have flooded into the church. Frequently we make it almost impossible for them to have a completely valid option. How difficult it is to explain to children why they cannot attend a certain church-sponsored functions when their friends and school companions are going there! It is so much easier to explain to them the negatives if that entertainment is sponsored by the world rather than by the church. Parents face the terrible risk of alienating their children from the church, or having the children alienated from them because they want to partake of the forbidden fruit so readily available to the other young people. This situation has reached crisis proportion in our church, and only by the grace of God working upon the hearts of receptive men and women is there any hope of a reversal of this hedonism within our church. No ordained gospel minister dare put the youth in such peril and parents in such quandary. /

We have learned poorly from the lessons of the past. It will

be recalled that in the first part of the nineteenth century such activities as dancing and novel reading were totally condemned and forbidden by the Methodist Church. One might wonder how that denomination has reached such a worldly condition as is readily seen today. The answer is very simple. As the generations of Methodism increased, there were those among the youth who started to rebel against the pure standards of the church. Some of these attended the dance hall, others engaged in novel reading. Foolishly, the church panicked in its endeavor to keep its youth within the fold. It was decided that dancing would be permitted in the church halls where it could be controlled and the young people could dance with other Christian young people. It was decided that the church would review novels and recommend those which they felt were suitable for Christian reading. How blind were the leaders of the Methodist Church almost a hundred and fifty years ago! But that now is history. Of course, not only did the young people learn to dance in the church hall and read recommended novels, more and more they absorbed morality by precedent, rather than morality by the Word of God. Soon the young people were going in droves to the dance halls of the world. A flood gate had opened whereby they were also soon reading novels of their own choosing.

In 1986 Russell was invited to preach in our Fulham Church in London. The services were held in a rented Methodist Church. The newly formed Fulham Seventh-day Adventist congregation consisted of about 100 members in attendance. Weekly on Sundays 12 to 15 Methodists attended their own services. In the foyer of the church was a history which revealed that decades previously, a congregation of 1500 had attended this Methodist Church. The lesson of this decline in membership must not be lost upon our ministry.

We as Adventists have learned these lessons poorly. We educate our young people in sports. We ourselves know only too

well from our own experience, that the sport will devour precious time and energy. The youth become obsessed with sports and these become a great barrier to their spiritual growth, development, or even interest. We train them in film watching, and no longer can they find a ready interest in the study of God's Word or in the presentation of the message to the world. In short, we are training our young people for eternal destruction rather than for eternal life. We are training them for the world rather than for God. We are training them for selfishness rather than for service.

Make no mistake, our youth are not fooled by our short sighted efforts to entertain them into the truth. We recall one Australian camp meeting where the Saturday evening program was given over to "Christian" rock entertainment in an atmosphere of psychedelic lights. The youth were delighted. There was foot stomping, whistling, clapping and raucous cheering. This program was presented as the climax of the ten-day spiritual "feast" (famine would more aptly describe the meetings). One young person who attended this meeting and no longer walks with God's people commented, "That was great! I really like that sort of music and atmosphere. But do they think they are going to keep us kids in the Church that way?" The *they* was left undefined and the question posed was strictly rhetorical.

Surely the God of heaven must weep over the fact that His church so frequently thinks like the world. We face the reality that almost three out of four of our youth in North America leave the church and if we were honest, we would have to admit that of those who remain in the church by no means all are converted. We are obsessed with keeping our young people in the church, rather than the higher motivation of leading them to the Lord, *and brethren, it is not working*. The church has less and less appeal. The young people are leaving our church because they have never heard the glorious truths that God has

entrusted to this people. They have never been educated in how to lead souls to Christ. They have never experienced the thrill of seeing men and women whose faces light up as the word of truth is expounded to them. They have never sensed the call of Christ upon their lives and service. They feel an idealism which is never directed towards the eternal values of heaven and is therefore dissipated upon things of this earth. How blinded can we be as a people in allowing our youth to march headlong towards eternal oblivion when the clear pathway to heaven can be placed before them! Is it any surprise that reports now put the apostasy of our youth close to three out of four?

The time has come for us to rid our churches and institutions of worldly sports and entertainments, and to replace them with an intense study of God's Word. While especially concentrating upon the glorious truths of the three angels' messages, we need to challenge our young people to give their lives in service for God and man, showing them and educating them in the joy of Christian service and in the fulfillment of their God-given talents. We realize that to carry out this plan would initially cause great opposition, especially from worldly parents and from youth whose lives have been directed towards the things of the world. But ultimately, not only would a much greater percentage of our young people be prepared for the kingdom, but they would also be young people who, under the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, could take this glorious message to the world. These would be young people who would no longer seek "fun," but would seek after the fulfillment that only God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can give.

We appeal to our ministry and particularly the growing corps of youth pastors to hold the standards high. Shortly God will require before His judgment bar, from each one of us who has accepted His ordination, an account of our stewardship of His holy and sacred trust.

## Chapter 14

# MATERIALISM

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**C**olin presented the early morning meetings at the workers' meeting of a large conference. One morning he spoke on the challenge of hastening the coming of Christ. He pointed out that it was the evil servant who said, "My Lord delayeth His coming" (Matt. 24:48). Then he gave a challenge to the ministers and their wives to do everything they could to hasten the coming of the Lord, and to make that the central theme of their ministries in their churches. After breakfast a white-haired minister, having difficulty holding back his tears, talked with Colin. He said, "For a number of years I thought that nothing I did had anything to do with the return of Jesus, and therefore I had only been putting in time waiting for the relaxation of retirement." Colin was gratified when this senior pastor indicated that during that morning he had made a commitment to the Lord that whatever time the Lord gave him, he would do everything he could to hasten the return of Jesus.

It seems that this may be the situation with many ministers. Those ministers who have felt less than fulfilled in their ministries often cannot wait for the time in which their retirement will take place. Tragically, rather than having the vision that the ministry is a lifelong calling, without real retirement, they feel a relief when they have reached their 40 years of service. Many long for retirement so that they can readjust to something unrelated in most ways to their ministerial calling. Some even take early retirement because of disillusionment.

We have to be thankful that the apostles and the early

pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church had no such concepts. Their call to the ministry was the motivating purpose of their entire lives. We greatly admire a number of ministers whom we knew in our youth. We think of one minister who raised up and built three new churches after his so-called retirement. We think of another who gave his whole retirement ministry well into his middle eighties to the spiritual education of children. He especially took as a burden the children of immigrants coming to Australia. It was clear that the ministry was not just a career, it was a lifetime calling to these men. They had a vision of the coming of the Lord and they did all in their power to hasten that day. These men never devalued their ministry by demoting it to a profession. For them it was nothing less than the calling of the Omnipotent One to the unsurpassable privilege of lifetime service to Him.

There is no question that in many ways there has been a change in emphasis among the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We would suggest to all ministers that they read again *Evangelism*, pp. 694-697. It has become increasingly common for ministers to deny that their ministry has anything to do with the coming of Jesus. It is asserted that Christ has a time appointed when He will come, though no words of inspiration support this. It is true that the time was prophesied when the judgment would commence (1844), but no time has been given as to when that judgment will end. In fact, we have been informed that

We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel; but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action. (Ev 696).

God also has given us these positive words:

By giving the gospel to the world, it is in our power to

hasten our Lord's return. (DA 633)

It is a privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain. (8T 22).

These quotations, of course, are based upon the message of Peter.

Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. (2 Peter 3:12).

It is no doubt a reflection on the changing attitude among ministers that there has been a decided weakening in the emphasis upon the second coming of Christ and the hastening of that great event. Often our congregations are left with no indication that we are living at the end of time. The life style of the minister, the conversation of the minister and the general emphasis of his family rather give the impression that the return of Jesus is light years away. It is very easy to settle down in ease and comfort and to decide that we no longer can be satisfied with the necessities of life but that we must have the luxuries.

In many churches today the ministers are in a socioeconomic group considerably ahead of that of most members of their congregations. It is very difficult under such circumstances, if not well nigh impossible, for the minister to teach the true principles of stewardship and sacrifice to the members of his church. Yet we have been told very distinctly that the work which began in sacrifice will end in even greater sacrifice. There is no question that a too comfortable mode of living is militating against finishing the work of God. How many times have the servants

of the Lord been told that there is sufficient resources in the church of God to do all that the Lord would have them do? If that was true when our membership was 70,000 or less, how much more certain is it today as we boast a membership of millions.

Predictably, the impact of such a comfortable life style has had its unfortunate consequences. We remember a minister who had served the church for well over 20 years remarking that he knew that he did not have a calling from God, but that the ministry offered a pleasant life style, a regular salary and a secure retirement plan and therefore he was not about to change his profession. How tragic such a situation is! Here was a man who, for the temporal rewards of this life, was prepared to jeopardize his eternal existence. There is no question that such a minister could not inspire his church with the great issues of the work of God. The preservation of retirement benefits has led many ministers to compromise their beliefs and to soften their presentations of truth so that there will be no question upon their ministry.

We cannot deny either that there has been clear evidence of materialism among many of the servants of the Lord in the homes that we build and the additional luxuries that we have accumulated such as boats and entertainment devices. It has become increasingly difficult to move ministers because of the problems created by the homes we have purchased. Especially is this true when ministers have chosen to buy homes in higher price ranges. Such homes are not easily sold and this fact leaves the conference with great difficulty in the movement of such ministers. Further, it limits the ability of the minister to accept the call that God has placed upon him for his service.

The minister's wife often bears a heavy reproach for the failure of her husband to respond fully to his ministerial calling. While hundreds of wives of church pastors are loving, dedicated partners in their husband's ministry, others are self-seek-



ing and materialistic. They destroy their husband's ministry by making excessive demands upon his means. These demands frequently lead to efforts to supplement already adequate incomes by the pursuit of sidelines, despite solemn warnings against such activities at the time of ordination. Often the "sideline" becomes the major object of the energies of the pastor.

Other wives prevent their husbands from accepting calls because they wish to remain where they are, often to follow some line of work which they have accepted. In the ministry, the family is a team. Sometimes it calls for sacrifices from all members, but these must cheerfully be made knowing that God always apportions His blessings to those who follow Him.

Russell, when called back to the mission field in 1978, hesitated to accept the call because of the educational needs of his three sons. As he discussed the matter in a family conference, Russell felt most ashamed of his hesitancy when his eldest son, Stephen, then seventeen years old said, "Dad, you've always told us that we are supposed to accept God's calls; why are you indecisive now?" Russell's two younger sons, Timothy and James, then 15 and 13 years old, respectively supported their brother. That unintended rebuke resolved the matter in one second. Subsequent years have demonstrated that the Lord took wonderful care of the education of his lads and has left no doubt that God had not only called the family to work for Him, but also had provided that which was best for each member of the family.

Many today state that they do not have faith in the calls they receive since too much politics is evident in the passage of many calls. While not wishing to deny this fact, having sat in committees where calls are passed, we have only occasionally observed such political moves. We ourselves believe that God is in every call. The matter does not rest with the calling body, but with the recipient. If we place our lives in God's care He alone will determine which calls we receive, irrespective of the motives of those

formulating the call.

On one occasion Russell received two calls simultaneously. Naturally it produced considerable confusion in the mind of the recipient. One call was for leadership in his field at division level, the other for leadership in an individual hospital. The Division call had been made in consultation with union presidents and other hospital presidents. It was passed by the appropriate committee. However, on the evening of the day the call was voted and just a few hours before its being passed on, a leader from the General Conference exerted his influence to cancel the call on the basis of Russell's involvement in standing against the new theology in Australia and Britain. Some saw this move as a political ploy designed to placate some in Australia and Britain who did not approve of his opposition to the preaching of the new theology. But for Russell such considerations were of no consequence. Undoubtedly God had answered his prayers and thus demonstrated which call was consistent with His divine foreknowledge. Secure in this knowledge he lost not a moment's rest over the intervention from thousands of miles away.

There was a time when ministers recognized that whenever the Lord called they would go. Today we sense an entirely different attitude. Having served on conference committees we cannot but notice the trend. When the minister is called to a position that he deems to be an advancement, somehow he usually feels that the Lord is calling him in that direction. Rarely does the same situation pertain when it is perceived that the next call is to a smaller church or that which he would see as a less favorable ministry. It is always argued that the minister has to pray earnestly about a call. But it does seem clear that rather than the call of God, it is the drawing power of the new call which determines, to a large extent, whether or not the recipient will move into the new responsibility. Manifestly, the work of God is hindered by such self-seeking and when it exists in the

ministry, then, of course, it is very difficult for the parishioners not to follow suit. One cannot but be reminded of the challenges that come to the ministry through the prophet Jeremiah.

And the Lord said unto me, A conspiracy is found in the men of Judah, among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refuse to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers. (Jeremiah 11:9,10).

These challenges are made even stronger as we move further into the words of Jeremiah.

Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my present portion a desolate wilderness. (Jer. 12:10).

How pathetic it would be if the materialistic gods and the destroying ministry of the pastors referred to above were to continue to be in evidence in the church of God today. Ezekiel has some stern words for the materialistic among the ministry.

Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be it to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but you feed not the flock. (Ezekiel 34:2,3).

As some wit has all too truly stated—the shepherds are so occupied fleecing the flock, they have no time to feed them.

The prophet says further:

Thus saith the Lord God; behold I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves anymore; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for

them. (Ezek. 34:10).

These solemn warnings surely apply just as much today as they did when the Old Testament prophets were warning ancient Israel. There is no question that many have accepted materialistic goals and in their own way have, by example and by precept, encouraged their congregations in this direction.

But there are problems that go beyond the individual minister. It is hard for our humble lay people not to see the lavishness of some of our office buildings that have been constructed. No one denies the importance of quality and substantial buildings, but the fact that increasing numbers of them contain facilities for recreation and sporting activities troubles the concerned laity and should concern God's ministers. It gives the signal that there is little urgency in the presentation of the message; that all things continue as they were from the beginning. It appears that the comfort and needs of the individual far outweigh the mission of God and His people. Some conferences are so strapped by repayments on lavish buildings that they cannot effectively continue the ministry within their conferences.

Materialism at its roots is selfishness, and only those who have been able to put aside the self-seeking concepts of life will be able to stand in the day of test and trial ahead. For ministers there is a much more solemn challenge than even for our laity. We stand as examples of the humble, simple, self-sacrificing life of Jesus. We give the signals to our people as to where we stand in the end of time. Myriads of our people are either going to rise up and call us blessed because of our dedicated, sacrificial ministry and the earnestness with which we have ministered to souls opening up to them the kingdom of heaven, or they are going to cry in anguished accusation that we knew the truth and we did not present it to them. A solemn burden rests upon every member of the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to first fully commit his life to God. We then can take up the challenge of preparing every soul in the church for the

kingdom of heaven; of preparing each man, woman and child for the coming of the great day of the Lord. This challenge surely is the only purpose for which we have accepted our sacred, divine calling.

## Chapter 15

# PENTECOSTALISM

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**T**he promise of the bestowal of God's Spirit upon His people is a wonderful and long-looked-for reality to all who long for the return of Jesus.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. (Joel 2:28-29).

That God has promised His Spirit in unprecedented measure at the end of time is undeniable. This latter-rain power, evidenced in a measure on the day of Pentecost, will so arouse God's people that they will be compelled to take His message of truth to every corner of this earth. No human knows this fact any more accurately than Satan. And it is his studied purpose to thwart the outpouring of the latter rain at all costs.

One of Satan's ploys is to attract God's people to worldly living so that they do not plead for God's Spirit as they live in Laodicean comfort. This tactic is sufficient for the lukewarm, the halfhearted in our midst. But it will not suffice to deceive those more advanced in their faith. These can be seduced from God's desire to bestow this great gift only by subtle deception, by a conviction that God has bestowed this gift, when in fact it is derived from another source.

No counterfeit of the latter-rain experience has been more successful than Pentecostalism. While enthusiastically singing "We are one in the Spirit," many are unaware that more than one

spirit is urging for their souls. While the most evident feature of Pentecostalism is glossolalia (speaking in unknown tongues) it consists of much more than this. It is a phenomenon whereby men and women embrace an emotional form of religion which produces an inner sensation of heightened religious arousal while they perform various external mannerisms. Some of these include the closing of the eyes while elevating the arms heavenward and performing various motions with the arms and hands, holding hands with others in a similar semi-trance state, embracing fellow believers, speaking in unrecognizable languages, falling fainting to the floor and even rolling about the floor in jerky, exaggerated movements. Such is sure evidence to these people that they are possessed of the Holy Spirit.

It is little wonder that when three days before His crucifixion, Jesus spoke earnestly to His apostles concerning the events surrounding the Second Advent, His very first admonition was

Take heed that no man deceive you. (Matt. 24:4).

And this cautionary advice must be taken to heart by every true believer, for

Insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (Matt. 24:24).

All too often we mouth this awesome warning far too lightly. It is no minor matter, nor is it one which any of us dare ignore.

Pentecostalism falls down when examined in the light of the most basic criteria of truth--the law and the testimony. Those resorting to these manifestations soon find doctrine and truth of little significance as compared with the "possession of the Spirit." One who demonstrated specified external manifestations is deemed to be "filled with the Spirit," irrespective of his beliefs and, in some cases, despite following a life style manifestly opposed to the Christian faith. However, while

Man looketh on the outward appearance...the Lord

looketh on the heart. (1 Sam. 16:7).

Many Christians have lost the concept that the Holy Spirit has been sent to guide them into all truth (John 16:13) and as a consequence truth has become secondary to them.

When Robert Brimsmead began to actively promote his so-called objective gospel, he offered it as a doctrine which would withstand the inroads of Pentecostalism with its almost totally subjective emphasis. Some, even amongst the ministry, were impressed with this claim. But error is never a valid defense against a second error. Even more incongruous was the fact that the new theology Robert Brimsmead promoted was the very vehicle which was to encourage some of those who listened to his word to turn towards these false manifestations which they blindly attribute to God, the Holy Spirit. Indeed it was the very sterility of the new theology that in frustration thrust many of these followers toward the gay abandonment and type of Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism, far from promoting true piety, leads to sacrilegious and boisterous conduct in God's house. How different from the pure and holy God we serve!

Why then did the new theology promote, amongst some, the very conduct and concepts it was guaranteed to resist? The answer is not too difficult to discern. The new theology is as dry as the proverbial hills of Gilboa. It promotes neither holy living nor deep spiritual satisfaction and understanding. Since it is error through and through there is only a limited group of scriptural passages which, even with gross misuse, can be utilized in expositions by its proponents. Thus the flock becomes bored and experiences an emptiness of soul. As a consequence many search to fill this automatic void. One answer is in the Pentecostal movement.

Here the emotions are stirred, the adrenalin rises, a pseudo-revival is experienced, and for a time a sense of exhilaration sweeps away the emptiness which quite naturally develops from following the new theology. But even in Pentecostalism



the apparent satisfaction to the soul is short-lived unless more and more extreme measures of emotional excitation are indulged. Every activity based upon severe emotional arousal produces a corresponding letdown in the following hours. It is simply a biological axiom that as the adrenalin ceases to flow, the body returns to a state akin to depression. Consequently the body craves more excitement often leading to wild music and behavior. Thus that peace which passeth all understanding is ever an unattainable goal. Indeed, it remains a perpetual far-off mirage. Cruel indeed are the counterfeits of Satan.

As more and more of our people are attracted to these external manifestations what responsibility do we, the pastors of the church, bear for this unfortunate trend? That question can be answered only by each individual minister. Are we preaching those truth-filled messages which alone satisfy the thirsty soul? Or are our services, week after week, indistinguishable from those preached by the clergy of the fallen churches of Christendom or even Roman Catholicism? We need to do much self-examination. Would we be regarded as extremists if we were to suggest to our fellow pastors that in the overwhelming number of sermons we preach each year they should be incapable of having been preached by ministers of any other faith? You see, we are different! We are Seventh-day Adventists! Our messages must reflect that difference.

When did we last preach the Three Angels' Messages? The Sabbath? The Investigative Judgment? The 2,300-Day Prophecy? The State of the Dead? The Law of God and the Faith of Jesus? Babylon? The Mark of the Beast?

The Mark of the Beast! Now there's a thoroughly Adventist topic. It is twenty years ago that the veteran Australian evangelist and church administrator, Pastor J. W. Kent, preached a never-to-be-forgotten sermon on this topic in the Wahroonga Church at the headquarters of the South Pacific Division. He was past his allotted span at the time. He mourned the fact that

he no longer heard sermons on this topic. He regretted that no longer was this vital doctrine a topic favored by most of the editors of our message magazines or preached by our audio and video media evangelists. And then in terms that he alone could utter, he stated (and how we wish we could convey in writing his magnificent intonation), "There are men and women, now our dear brethren and sisters in the faith, for whom the very first words they heard from this old voice of mine, were words spoken in exposition of this grand old topic of the mark of the Beast." Initially such a statement may sound astounding. And indeed it is. But we should not feel surprised that men and women were drawn to God's truth by this topic since it is a central feature of the third angel's message (Rev. 14:9). God alone knows that which will convict, and in His supreme love for mankind He has placed His optimal salvation "weapons" in His last message to sinners. But are we preaching these mighty themes, or are we choosing topics of our own devising and ignoring God's instructions?

If we are not presenting the meat of the Word to our congregations, then we are guilty of preparing the way for such an emptiness of soul that some will turn to Pentecostalism in desperation. It may not be the extreme forms we have detailed, but externals will become the means to, and not the consequences of, a Christian experience. The former is counterfeit, the latter genuine.

Jesus emphasized that only those born of water and of the Spirit will be saved in the Kingdom.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5).

✱ Being born of water encompasses forgiveness (justification).

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am

not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. (Matt. 3:11).

Being born of the Spirit occurs only when Christ empowers obedience to God's Word.

And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. (Acts 5:32).

Colin dialogued with a Pentecostal lady who assured him that she was born of the Spirit because she had frequently spoken in tongues. Having a mother who is a Seventh-day Adventist, she knew the Seventh-day Adventist message well. He pointed out the Spirit (if it was God's Spirit) led to all truth. He explained that Catholics who had embraced the Pentecostal movement claimed it had enhanced the meaning of the rosary and the mass. She shocked Colin by saying she could accept that though she was a good Baptist. The Colin broached the Sabbath question and she assured him she would keep the Sabbath when the Spirit told her. It was pointed out that the Spirit had already brought that to her attention, for

Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (II Peter 1:21).

This incident highlighted the fact that the false revival of the Spirit leads to disobedience although Peter affirmed that only those who are obedient receive the power of God's Spirit.

We would take a moment to speak to our youth pastors. So often we ape the fallen churches in our feeble efforts to halt the overwhelming tide of apostasy amongst our young people. In order to attract them to our meetings we attempt to provide them with at least the milder forms of externalism—clapping hands, stamping feet, sometimes whistling, hand holding, rock singing, to name a few. The other churches do this, and we follow suite. We never stop for a moment's reflection upon the almost total failure of these other churches to arrest the

(hemorrhage of youth from their folds. Why follow faulted methods?

Other youth leaders feel that they can entertain our youth into God's kingdom. Sports of many forms, unsanctified music, Hollywood films, the ballet, the opera, all have been utilized in misdirected attempts to use externals to satisfy the soul. But God's truth alone can achieve this goal whether one is sixteen or sixty. Pastors, we must not direct our youth towards superficial, external modes of religion. Most assuredly to do so will lead them astray and God will require their souls at our hands.

Conference committee members, resist the false premise that the most liberal of our pastors is the one most likely to attract our youth to a lifelong commitment to our faith. It is amazing just how many sober leaders fall into this trap. We were all youth ourselves not many years ago. Do we not recall our own experiences? The ones left the deepest impressions upon our souls were those deeply devoted to the truths of God's Word irrespective of their age. Indeed aged men like Pastor R. A. R. Thrift who baptized us, Pastors Cyril Palmer, W. J. Kent, and middle aged men like Pastors O. K. Anderson, Ralph Tudor, and George Burnside left the most indelible impressions upon our early lives, for they were men of deep belief. They left us with no void which hankered after the superficialities of Pentecostalism.

Our congregations need the infilling of the Holy Spirit. They must be encouraged to pray for the latter rain. May it be sought in all diligence by God-fearing men and women encouraged by true shepherds of the flock.

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

(1 Peter 5:4).

## Chapter 16

# CLERICALISM

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**A**n interesting phenomenon is overtaking the Seventh-day Adventist Church. On the one hand we see in many congregations an increasing trend towards congregationalism, and on the other, we see signs of ominous hierarchical domination. Perhaps the two are interdependent.

As more and more congregations seek to flex their independence, some church leaders, in alarm, seek to place tighter and tighter restraints upon the members within the Church and the individual church congregations. This in turn leads some churches to display further independence of the conference. It is the proverbial chicken-and-egg problem. The drift towards increasing congregationalism can be seen in the number of independent Adventist preachers that are increasingly invited into the churches. (Many of these ministries have arisen from a perceived failure of the majority of us pastors to uphold Adventist standards and preach our distinctive truths. This trend has popularized such independent ministries as believers seek to hear more challenging messages.) It can further be seen by the fact that now, even in relatively small churches, it is usual for the conference leaders in North America to consult extensively with the leadership of the church congregations concerning the choice of pastors for their church.

The drift towards hierarchical domination is evident in a number of areas. Corresponding to the increase in the number of independent Seventh-day Adventist ministers preaching in the pulpits, has come an increasing tendency for the conferen-

ces to attempt to control the situation. Thus, more and more conferences are formulating legislation demanding that no one preach within the churches without conference approval. It can also be seen in the alarming increase in political activism in the elections at all levels from the local church to the General Conference. The issue frequently is that of control and manipulation.

Some church leaders mistakenly conclude that independent ministries are a challenge to the official church organization. This is an unnecessary insecurity on the part of those leaders, many of whom imagine that vast sums of money are diverted from the conference treasury by these speakers. When the Hartland Bible Conference was held in the Netherlands in 1986 wild rumors were spread that the team of speakers gathered 800,000 guilders (\$US 400,000). The truth was that they sold just over 1,000 guilders (\$US 500) worth of books and received no other funds.

In truth the majority of itinerant preachers to build up the morale of God's people and do much to encourage the stewardship of those believers. Yet many Conference leaders are presently bent on devising plans to block such ministries. They overstep their God-ordained responsibilities, attempting to enforce their wills upon those congregations whose right it is to select those who minister to their own spiritual needs. No conference official should attempt to usurp this right.

Rather should our church leaders examine the reasons for the desire of many of our people to hear the plain Word of God unmixed with doubt. Perhaps the religious correspondent for *Newsweek* gave a pointer to this matter when, speaking of other Protestant churches he stated, "Sunday sermons survive, of course, but as brief homilies for the inattentive, delivered mostly by preachers anxious to please." (*Newsweek* Oct. 20, 1986). Could it be that some preaching within our churches reaches only this level? And could it be the reason that earnest souls

yearn to hear the meat of the Word? Dare any leader or pastor set himself up as a barrier to God's people hearing His Word?

Let it not be forgotten that the Advent movement arose out of the blessings bestowed by itinerant preachers. Would the Seventh-day Adventists of our present era have closed their doors to the preaching of William Miller? In all honesty we would have to admit that some would have. The same would be true of those great revivalists James and Ellen White. Let no conference president or church pastor take upon his shoulders the responsibility of dictating that which God's people will hear and that which they will not. Leaders are sometimes in no better position to make such a judgment than the congregations themselves. Furthermore, we have been strictly forbidden such a course of action.

Many had a knowledge of God and His law; but not only rejected the message of the preachers of righteousness ✓ themselves, but used all their influence to prevent others from being obedient to God. (*Signs of the Times*, April 1, 1886)

Should we see dangers in issuing an invitation to a speaker, it is our duty to warn, but not to coerce, God's people. They may in fact be right, and we ourselves wrong. If through an error of judgment the flock invites one into the pulpit who presents falsehood, truth will shine all the brighter by comparison.

Truth is eternal, and conflict with error will only make manifest its strength. (TM 107).

Since the 1740s when the great Methodist itinerant preacher, George Whitfield, led men and women to live a sanctified life, most revivals have come from the ministry of men and women prepared to take their faith to those eager to listen. Characteristically there has been "an aural tug for souls between itinerant preachers gifted in dramatic delivery and the more subdued

admonishments of educated parish clergy." (*Newsweek* Oct. 20, 1986). Once the role of the revivalist was cherished in our church, and as pastors, we must not permit hierarchical domination to hinder this God-ordained ministry.

Let those who have sought to rule their fellow workers study to know what manner of spirit they are of. They should seek the Lord by fasting and prayer, and in humility of soul. (9T 275).

The Roman Catholic view of the place of the clergy as dictators to the laity was expressed in 1906 by Pope Pius X in his papal encyclical, *Vehementer Nos*.

As for the masses of people, they have no other right than that of letting themselves be led, and of following their pastors as a docile flock.

No right-thinking Seventh-day Adventist minister could accept such an appalling view. Yet more and more, some of our church leaders are openly claiming a similar hierarchical attitude like that taken by the Roman Catholic Church. Let us evidence this fact.

Dr. Derrick Proctor's long-running lawsuit with the Seventh-day Adventist Church was finally decided on October 29, 1986. Proctor lost the case, in which he contended that the church and various of its entities conspired illegally to interfere in his book-selling business in violation of antitrust and conspiracy laws. The major strategy of the General Conference in this case was to convince the court that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is essentially a hierarchical church, in which the directives and orders of the General Conference have binding authority upon all other entities of the church. The General Conference submitted that "next to the Roman Catholic Church, the Adventist Church is the most centralized of all major Christian denominations in



this country." (*Student Movement* - Student paper of Andrews University, Nov. 6, 1986).

Every true minister must disassociate himself from this usurpation of authority.

At the 1986 Annual Council held in Rio de Janeiro in October, an apparently innocent motion was passed permitting the General Conference to plan a worldwide strategy to finish the work. Little did the delegates anticipate that this motion would be used immediately by leaders to demand that from 1988 the use of all budgets for overseas missionary service would be dictated by the General Conference, rather than by each division located where the needs are and thus best able to make such determinations.

What has been said of the Anglican Church sometimes appears to approximate the attitudes of some of our own ministers. Sir Kenneth Grubb complained, "The Church of England does not give a strong impression of being interested in its laity: it seems either to ride them or to fear them." (*A Layman Looks at the Church*).

Over a quarter of a century ago Colin was placed on a constitutional subcommittee at the Greater Sydney Conference Camp session. Being only twenty-eight years old at the time he was overawed by his three fellow subcommittee members who were all over sixty years of age and had given years of denominational service. One Church sent a delegation headed by its pastor to recommend that the report of the conference nominating committee be held over to the next session of the conference session (a matter of a few hours) in order to give time for due consideration. In the subsequent discussion Colin mentioned that he saw real merit in the proposal. The other three committee members looked upon him in horror. "You are just a young man," the chairman said, "With the benefit of our experience we could never recommend such a proposal for you would find that the lay people would likely attempt to over-

throw the report if given time to marshall their forces." It was felt at the time that this opinion was most unworthy of our faithful lay people. Neither the passage of time nor our ordination has altered that opinion.

✓ The Seventh-day Adventist Church was established under the direction of God as neither congregational nor hierarchical (episcopal). The Lord established a representative form of government, a government whose base was in the local church membership, through all levels of our church, up to the General Conference. Thus the members formed the church, and the church in turn, was responsible for choosing the leadership of the conference and the conferences for choosing the leadership of the unions and the unions for choosing the leadership of the divisions and the General Conference. Thus the authority of the church was vested at the lower, rather than the upper, levels of organization.

Now, it is true that the church has the authority to dismiss members who are no longer consistent with the teachings and/or the practices of the church. The conference has the authority, which has occasionally been exercised, to disfellowship a church from the sisterhood of churches. Theoretically the union has the authority to disfellowship a conference and the division a union, and the General Conference a division, though to the best of our knowledge, at these levels it has never actually taken place. However, there was to be a counseling together on the part of each level to maintain the harmony and purity of God's church.

When in 1863 the General Conference was established, the format was very simple--a General Conference and a few local conferences. But, as the work of God rapidly assumed international proportions, greater needs were felt and wider organizational bases were envisioned. Under the leadership of General Conference President George Butler, strong efforts were made towards the processes of centralization, and certainly evidence

points to an increasing direction towards a more hierarchical, General Conference-dominated, organization. But the Lord, through Sister White, was to disavow such organization. It became very clear that God was a Decentralist. His call was for the scattering of the faithful. The counsel was against Jerusalem centers where great congregations of Adventists would cluster together and forget the ministry that God had placed upon them. Such centers would become spiritually impotent and less and less convicted of the great call to finish the work of God on earth. Thus as the church grew rapidly, there were calls by God to decentralize the work.

At the 1901 General Conference session, the call was to take the leadership out of the hands of one man and to disperse it. Sister White was instructed that we were to have a number of regional General Conference presidents in various parts of the world. While this plan may seem as an avenue of disunity, she was shown that indeed it would bring greater unity to God's work. However, by 1903 the concept of decentralization was largely rejected. It was hard for Seventh-day Adventists to see organizational patterns different from those which existed in the world at large.

Centralization of authority was increased in this century by the production of a church manual. In early 1883, a committee was set up by the General Conference to look into the possibility of the establishment of a church manual. The committee unanimously rejected the concept for the following reasons:

It is the unanimous opinion of the committee appointed to consider the matter of a Church Manual, that it would not be advisable to have a Church Manual. We consider it unnecessary because we already have surmounted the greatest difficulties connected with church organization without one; and perfect harmony exists among us on this subject. It would seem to many like a step towards the formation of a creed or a discipline, other than the

Bible, something we have always been opposed to as a denomination. If we had one, we fear many, especially these commencing to preach, would study it to obtain guidance in religious matters, rather than to seek it in the Bible, and from the leading of the Spirit of God, which would tend to their hindrance in genuine religious experience and in knowledge of the mind of the Spirit. It was in taking similar steps that other bodies of Christians first began to lose their simplicity and became formal and spiritually lifeless. Why should we imitate them? The committee feels, in the short, that our tendency should be in the direction of the policy and close conformity of the Bible, rather than to elaborate defining every point in the church management and church ordinances. (RH Nov. 20, 1883).

Elder George Butler, then president of the General Conference, wrote an article giving the readers the reasons that the issuance of a church manual would not be advisable. This article appeared in the *Review and Herald* of November 27, 1883. Let us note a two of his comments.

When brethren who have favored a manual have even contended that such a work was not to be anything like a creed or a discipline, or to have any authority to settle disputed points, but was only to be considered as a book containing hints for the help of those of little experience, yet it must be evident that such a work, issued under the auspices of the General Conference, would at once, carry with it much weight of authority, and would be consulted by most of our young ministers. It would gradually shape and mould the whole body; and those who did not follow it would be considered out of harmony with established principles of Church order. And really, is this not the object of a manual? What would be the use of one if not to accomplish such a result? But would this result, on a whole, be a benefit?

Would our ministers be broader, more original, more self-reliant men? Would they be better depended on in great emergencies? Would their spiritual experience likely be deeper and their judgment more reliable? We think the tendency all the other way.... We have preserved simplicity, and have prospered in so doing. It is best to let well enough alone. For these and other reasons, the church manual was rejected. It is probable that it will never be brought forward again.

Here Butler was wrong in his prediction and indeed in 1932 a manual was voted. For a number of years the manual seemed to be of considerable value to the church, but step by step changes took place, including the changes in the early fifties which began to open a floodgate in terms of morality within the church. This modification liberalized the issue of divorce and remarriage.

However, many believe that it was the 1980 voting of a new statement of beliefs that has produced the greatest threat to the church. More and more it is perceived that the statement of fundamental beliefs voted at that time is limiting preaching within the church in a number of areas such as the nature of Christ, the nature of salvation, and the atonement. (An example of this trend is given.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has 27 fundamental beliefs. They are basic and general and they leave much room for individual interpretation and study. But we should not raise a private doctrinal concern, no matter how dearly we hold it, to the level of fundamentals. (*Adventist Review*, July 2, 1987).

The statements have been left sufficiently vague to make it difficult for men and women, with any degree of certainty, to preach the surety of God's message in these areas. Indeed, the statement of beliefs, though not meant to represent a creed in nature, is being increasingly used by some church administrators in this fashion. If the trend continues, as will be inevitable

unless a change is made, undoubtedly, these types of vague creeds will eventually engulf the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We cannot afford to allow this to happen.

In 1981 at a Forum meeting held in the Avondale College chapel, at which Russell was present, one speaker, then a division worker, contended that Seventh-day Adventists were not obliged to accept the fact that the heavenly sanctuary has two apartments, since the number of apartments is not mentioned in the Dallas statement of beliefs. This is creedalism of the worst sort. Seventh-day Adventists do not believe a statement of beliefs; rather they accept every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Surely God has informed us in unmistakable words that His sanctuary has two apartments (see *Christ In His Sanctuary*, p 14). In opinions such as that here reported, lies the real dangers in the misuse of such statements of belief.

There is no question that the motives of the church manual and a set of statements are honorable. As in other churches, these have been presented to define belief for believers, as well as those newly interested in the faith, and for those outside the faith. Eventually, however, they become a rigid standard by which all orthodoxy is evaluated and church discipline determined. Less and less is the Bible referred to as the arbiter of faith and more and more is its role usurped by the statement of beliefs. This trend is dangerous, and must be reversed if we are to stand in a clear pathway.

However, as stated before, we must be very careful not to move towards independence totally removed from the counsel of the brethren. We believe that there is no better statement balancing the whole picture than that in the ninth volume of the *Testimonies*, written by Sister White to the delegates at the General Conference session in May 30, 1909, held in Washington D.C.

O, how Satan would rejoice if he could succeed in his efforts to get in among this people and disorganize the work at a time

when thorough organization is essential and will be the greatest power to keep out spurious uprisings and to refute claims not endorsed by the Word of God! We want to hold the lines evenly, that there shall be no breaking down of the system of organization and order that has been built up by wise, careful labor. License must not be given to disorderly elements that desire to control the work at this time. Some have advanced the thought that, as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But, I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man being independent. (9T 258).

Yet, Sister White, while decrying anarchy within the Church, just as strongly decries tyranny.

On the other hand, the leaders among God's people are to guard against the dangers of condemning the methods of individual workers who are led by the Lord to do a special work that but few are fitted to do. Let brethren in responsibility be slow to criticize movements that are not in perfect harmony with their methods of labor. Let them never suppose that every plan should reflect their own personality. Let them not fear to trust another's methods; for by withholding their confidence from a brother laborer who, with humility and consecrated zeal, is doing a special work in God's appointed way, they are retarding the advancement of the Lord's cause. (9T 259).

The Lord's work is injured by disorganization or overcontrol by leadership. The church is hindered by both congregationalism and hierarchicalism.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church accepts the basic Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. It does not believe that God endows theologians or ministers with a special portion of insight into the Word of God.

We believe that the time has come to reconsider the system used to appoint church pastors. In the early history of the

Adventist Church, district, rather than church pastors, were appointed. The district pastors were not assigned to any specific church *per se*, but were assigned to a particular city or region with the primary purpose of evangelizing that area. We well remember this situation existing during our childhood. It did not mean that the pastors were not the preachers for most Sabbath services, nor that they were independent of the church. However, the basic functions of the church were handled by the lay leadership. The board meetings, the business meetings, the ingathering campaigns, and other local church functions were conducted under lay leadership. The laity also assumed the responsibility of dealing with the physical needs of the members of the church as well as their material needs. Unlike the present situation, when it is likely that if a member of the church is sick, the pastor is asked to visit that member, this duty was then the function of the elders, deacons, deaconesses and the church members. These persons were the shepherds of the flock.

The present system of following the worldly practice of appointing church pastors has led to much impotency and inertia on the part of the laity. The ministry has frequently been reduced to "baby-sitters" of the spiritually and emotionally disturbed members of the church. The role of the pastor has become more one of consolidation and counseling rather than evangelizing and pressing forward the message of salvation. In some of our larger churches, it is not uncommon to see up to fifty ordained ministers in the pews during the Sabbath services and a pastoral staff sometimes approaching ten. The energies of the church and the human resources of its members are being pitifully underused.

In the early Christian church it was not as it is today, and we are, in many ways to replicate the church of the early Christian era. Paul, Peter, John and the other apostles were out on the forefront of ministry, converting men and women from



paganism and Judaism to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Elders were appointed to consolidate the members of the church. Deacons were appointed to look after the physical needs of church members, while the evangelists moved on. Certainly, they did not lose their burden for the churches that they had established, but the consolidation of the members and the development of the church was left primarily in the hands of lay leaders.

But quickly clericalism took over the church and the lay elders became clergy who in turn dominated the direction of the church.

When there were calls for pastors for Seventh-day Adventist Churches that were well established, Sister White made it clear that it was those areas that did not have a strong witness to the truth where the pastors were required. We have a situation today where still the majority of areas of our cities and counties do not have strong evangelistic thrusts. If our laity were given the responsibility of leadership in shepherding the members of the church and in handling the business and other local activities of the church, then the pastor would fulfill the responsibility and opportunity of pressing forward the vistas of the gospel. Our laity would be enriched by their responsibilities and the church would be strengthened under such leadership.

The present role of the pastor has often led to significant difficulties. Firstly, his close connection with the affairs of the church has frequently placed him in the invidious position of having to take sides, thus minimizing the effectiveness of his pulpit ministry with those who have disagreed with the position taken by the pastor. The role of counseling, which has become a dominant part of the pastor's responsibility, has often led to tragic consequences. It has been especially true when the counseling has been with women having marital problems. It is a heartbreaking fact that many of our ministers every year lose their integrity with women whom they have counseled. This form of ministry is against the clearest testimony of the Lord

instructing men to refrain from counseling with women concerning their marital problems.

When a woman relates her family troubles or complains of her husband to another man, she violates her marriage vows; she dishonors her husband and breaks down the wall erected to preserve the sanctity of the marriage relation; she throws wide open the door and invites Satan to enter with his insidious temptations. If a woman comes to a Christian brother with her tale of woes, her disappointments and trials, he should ever advise her, if she must confide her troubles to someone, to select sisters for her confidants, and then there will be no appearance of evil whereby the cause of God may suffer reproach. (AH 338).

Moreover, the role of the church pastor has led more and more to the elevation of the clergy to adopt the role of final authorities in churches, until the time has come when it has been known for pastors to veto the decisions of their church boards. The situation has extended to conferences vetoing the decisions of church boards or else exerting severe ecclesiastical pressure upon these boards. Such decisions are critically challenging the autonomy of each level of organization. More and more the pastor becomes the leader rather than the servant of the church and the laity is inclined to withdraw from the responsibilities with which they could minister in the church. In many churches the elders are little more than men who announce the hymns for the divine service and offer the occasional prayer.

A reconsideration of the district-pastor concept, and a reassessment of the role of the laity could do much to reverse the trends of indolence and passivity seen among the majority of laity in the Western world today. If there is any question about this, we need only to compare the vitality of the church in those countries where ministers are few and members are great

as opposed to the Western world where the ratio of pastors to members is very high. While it would be wrong to argue that it is the only factor in the remarkable membership growth in Third World countries, yet, we cannot but believe that it is a partial answer to the situation. Where laity is required to take services, prayer meetings, evangelistic meetings, and to minister directly to the needs of the members of the church, there is room for much greater growth and vitality within the church. /

## Chapter 17

# FUTURISM

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**T**he Roman Catholic Church was in a dilemma. The Protestant Reformation was sweeping all before it in the European sphere. The ministry of Luther, Calvin, Zwingle, Knox and others, had brought confusion and even panic into the ranks of the Catholic Church, which led to the Council of Trent, 1545-1563. The earnest concern of the bishops of the Catholic Church was to redefine doctrine and to establish ways of combating the Protestant Reformation. One of the most telling blows meted out to the Catholic Church by the Protestant Reformers was the pinpointing of the church as the little horn, the beast-power, the anti-christ, the man of sin, the scarlet-clad women, the mother of harlots, and other Biblical synonyms. These accusations had brought great suspicion and distrust to the Roman Catholic Church.

Not long before the Council of Trent, Rome instituted what has often been called in history, the Counter, or the Catholic Reformation. Ignatius Loyola, the Spanish adventurer and priest, initiated the new order, known as the Society of Jesus, or more commonly, Jesuits. Very quickly they became an elite corps within the Catholic Church and it was the Jesuits to whom the church looked for ways to turn the attack of the Protestants away from Catholicism. Ultimately, two of the most outstanding members of the order, Louis de Alcazar and Francisco Ribera came up with solutions. Louis de Alcazar, following some of the ancient Maccabee traditions, suggested that the rather obscure Seleucid king, Antiochus IV (Epiphanes IV) who had desecrated the sanctuary in Jerusalem during the second

century b.c., answered the description of the little horn of Daniel 7 and 8. The fact that the abomination of desolation associated with the little horn is also spoken of in the future by Christ in Matthew 24:15 did not seem to concern the Catholic Church. Nor has it concerned those modern-day men and women who have accepted, at least in part, this so-called preterist view of prophecy (the view that takes us back into the past suggesting that the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation were all fulfilled by the end of the first century of the Christian era).

On the other hand, Francisco Ribera proposed the classical futurist view. Ribera claimed that the Papacy could not be pinpointed as the man of sin or the little horn or any of the other characteristics so vividly described in the Word of God, for this referred to a personage who would arise at the very end of time just before the return of Christ. It is indeed this futurist view, which today has all but engulfed Protestantism.

The Catholic Church did little with the theological manipulations of de Alcazar and Ribera. They were simply satisfied that they had an "answer" to the Reformers' challenges to the Papacy. For many years, the theses of de Alcazar and Ribera lay gathering dust on the shelves of the universities. It wasn't until the nineteenth century that the futurist view returned to prominence. Morford, a professor at Oxford University, had strongly supported, and indeed was one of the major initiators of, the Anglo-Catholic move to reunite the Church of England with the Roman Catholic Church. Morford was taken aback by the stiff opposition from many loyal Protestant Anglicans who pointed out that there was no way that they could join with the Catholic Church because the pope was the anti-christ and the man of sin, Morford "dusted down" the thesis of Ribera and began to teach the futurist view with considerable vigor, declaring that the man of sin would appear at the end of time.

One of the students at Oxford during this period by the name of John Darby, became the founder of the Plymouth

Brethren denomination. He accepted Morford's futurism. The group initially expanded rather rapidly and spread to other countries of the world including the United States of America. However, it was not until the conversion of the Texas attorney, Schofield, that futurism began to have an impact upon the fundamental churches of America, especially in the South. Schofield developed his Bible notes which became part of the Schofield Bible scattered widely by colporteurs throughout the United States, particularly in the South. So influential has the Schofield Bible become that few question the claims that this Bible has done more to shape the theology of conservative Protestantism than any seminary in the United States. Thus it is very hard to find Protestants of an evangelical bent who are not strongly persuaded by futurism. Tragically, futurism has made its assault upon the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It certainly was the basis of Desmond Ford's eschatological errors. (Although Dr. Ford also incorporated preterist concepts into his prophetic expositions.) Over the last ten years in unsuspecting ways, futurism has been pressed upon the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Often futurism has come not as denial of the traditional Adventist historicist view of biblical prophecy, but rather as a companion to that view. For example, Dr. Ford held that at the same time the preterist, historicist, and futurist views, all were accurate as he pressed his apotelesmatic interpretation of prophecy upon those who heard him and those who read his books. (Apotelesmatic--the result of certain positions of the stars on human destiny. Here used as Ford used it to refer to successive fulfillments of prophecy.) Today the apotelesmatic principle has been interpreted as the successive fulfillment of prophecy. Of course the Bible does have some such fulfillments. The Elijah message was partially fulfilled by John the Baptist, but will be much more fully fulfilled at the end of time. The message of Matthew 24 had a partial fulfillment at the destruc-

tion of Jerusalem. The presentation of the three angels' messages around the time of the Great Disappointment, will also be more completely fulfilled at the end of time. But in each of these instances and in some others, we do have clear evidence from inspiration that the successive fulfillment will occur. On the other hand, the apotelesmatic principle is now applied to many prophetic passages on which Inspiration has no such information. Such an application becomes very dangerous, for indeed, this kind of interpretation rests upon speculation alone. Sister White has given us clear warnings concerning it.

<sup>1</sup> Although Dr. Ford also incorporated preterist concepts into his prophetic expositions.

<sup>2</sup> Apotelesmatic - the result of certain positions of the stars on human destiny. Here used as Ford used it to refer to successive fulfillments of prophecy.

Of deep concern is the fact of its Jesuit origins. That in itself must raise significant flags. Almost inevitably the ones presenting such futuristic interpretations do not initially deny the historicist's interpretation. However, this is so often how Satan introduces heresy. For example, the early Christian churches for considerable periods of time kept both Sunday and Sabbath sacred. Eventually however, it was the error that prevailed and the Sabbath was completely ignored. As mentioned earlier, Dr. Ford at one time taught a belief in the historicist's view as well as a preterist and as a futurist view. Today he essentially denies the historicist view.

With the increasing interfacing with evangelicals and the increase in Satanic deceptions at the end of time, it is to be expected that more and more futuristic interpretations will be presented. Not only have these come in relationship to Daniel 7, 8, and 9, but also a strong emphasis on futurism has been picked up in the areas of the seven seals and the seven trumpets, and other areas of Revelation including Revelation 13:5, where the voice of Inspiration declares that the forty and two months

referred to here specifically relate to the 1260 years of papal persecution ending in 1798. (See GC 54).

✓ Such speculative theology and prophecy has considerable danger. First, there is no way that these futuristic predictions can be proved false due to the fact that they are yet to take place in the future. That makes them untestable at the present time. Second, such futuristic predictions often lead to the great disappointment of those who have implicitly trusted in them, and thus many are turned away from the precious truths of God. The Spirit of Prophecy gives timely warnings against repetitive interpretations of already fulfilled prophecies.

There must be no long discussions, presenting new theories in regard to the prophecies which God has already made plain. Now the great work from which the mind should not be diverted is the consideration of our personal safety in the sight of God. (Manuscript 32A, 1896).

\* You are in danger... you recognize these facts in Bible history as true, but apply them to the future.... Those who are seeking to understand this message will not be led by the Lord to make an application of the Word that will undermine the foundation and remove the pillars of the faith that has made Seventh-day Adventists what they are today. But these new lights in prophetic lines are manifest in misapplying the Word and setting the people of God adrift without an anchor to hold them. (2SM 103, 4).

✓ Some will take the truth applicable to their time and place it in the future. Events in the train of prophecy that had their fulfillment away in the past are made future, and thus by these theories the faith of some is undermined. (2SM 102).

\* Many will stand in our pulpits with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan. (TM 409,10).



The strong movement towards the jubilee interpretation has frequently been bound up with special interpretations based on time. While we do not, in any way decry a deep study and investigation of the significance of the jubilee, we nevertheless are very concerned about those who in accepting some of the theories, propose the time implications as well. It is certain that when some of these times pass, other new interpretations will be developed. (When Russell visited India just after the Day of Atonement in October, 1986 many who, on the basis of one time theory constructed from jubilee reasoning, anticipated the United States' introduction of Sunday laws, were understandably perplexed and dejected when the prediction remained unfulfilled. Those investigating the jubilee have discovered much useful material, but these valid insights must never be pressed as evidence in support of futuristic time setting.)

Jesus has told His disciples to "watch," but not for a definite time. His followers are to be in the position of those who are listening to the orders of their Captain; they are to watch, wait, pray, and work as they approach the time of the coming of the Lord; but no one will be able to predict just when that time will come; for "of that day and hour knoweth no man." You will not be able to say He will come in one, two, or five years, neither are you to put off His coming by stating that it may not be for ten or twenty years. (Ev 221).

The counsel of God through inspiration declares that there will be no message based on time during the era of probation.

The historicist's platform of the Reformers and of the pioneers of the Advent Church has been clearly confirmed in the writings of Sister White. This fact should be sufficient for Seventh-day Adventists to be wary of these new futuristic interpretations. The fact that futurism is so deeply rooted in Jesuit theology should provide another striking reason for proper caution.

## Chapter 18

# INSTITUTIONALISM

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**S**ix great resources of the church need to cooperate in harmony for the finishing of God's work. It is God's plan that the medical work link hands with the evangelistic work; that the laity link hands with the ministry and that the self-supporting work link hands with denominational work. This harmony will not be achieved by one dominating the other, but where, in mutual trust, each links hands with the other for the final thrust of God's salvation message to the world.

Both of us have been privileged to be appointed to positions of trust in the organized work of the church of God. Both have also accepted responsibilities in self-supporting institutions. Both forms of ministry, we believe, are ordained of God. All our denominational service has been institutional. Our own years of service typify the work of others who have sought service for God. Both of us taught in denominational primary schools for three years (1952-54 inclusive). Following a decade of education, Colin was appointed chairman of the Department of Education at Avondale College, Australia, in 1965 and occupied that post until his appointment as academic dean in West Indies College, Jamaica, in 1970. He was appointed president of this denominational college six months later. In 1973 Colin accepted the post of chairman of the Department of Psychology at Columbia Union College, Washington, D.C. Six months following his assumption of that responsibility he was appointed the academic dean of the institution and two months later he accepted the post of college president.

Since 1978 Colin has labored in self-supporting institutions, firstly as the foundation dean of the college at Weimar Institute in California and, since 1983, as foundation president of Hartland Institute of Health and Education in Virginia.

Russell also spent a decade in university education. In 1966 he was appointed to the staff of the denominational health center and hospital in Warburton, Victoria (Australia). From here in 1967 he accepted a similar post in the Penang Adventist Hospital in Malaysia, later assuming the role of Chief of Staff. In 1974 Russell transferred to Sydney Adventist Hospital, Australia, but after a year's service left denominational employ for three years to move to Melbourne following the death of our mother. In 1978 Russell returned to the Far East to serve in the Bangkok Adventist Hospital, Thailand, where, within a year, he was appointed hospital president, a post he held until 1984 when he gave over two years of service as the medical director of Enton Medical Center in Surrey, England. This latter medical center was a self-supporting institution witnessing to the citizens of that great country. Russell returned to denominational service when appointed as president of the Penang Adventist Hospital in Malaysia in 1986.

These experiences have led us to appreciate the values of both denominational and self-supporting ministries. At all times our ties with the church have remained very close. Colin has remained a credentialed minister of the church throughout his years of service in self-supporting ministry. While at Weimar Institute the Northern California Conference issued him his credentials, and at Hartland his credentials have been issued by the Potomac Conference. During Russell's period of service in self-supporting work his ministerial credentials were issued by the British Union. Each has received denominational service credit for every year of self-supporting work.

Many are unaware of this close co-operation between the denominational service and the self-supporting work and some-

how see these two arms of church service in competition rather than co-operation. Such is a false assessment. Hartland Institute and staff form a valuable membership of eight churches within the Potomac Conference--Amicus, Charlottesville, Culpepper, Fredericksburg, Hyattsville, Orange, Penuel and Warrenton. Elder Taylor IV of the Bible Department of Hartland College pastors the Warrenton Church in the Potomac Conference. Revelation and Daniel seminars, Bible studies and health seminars are conducted by staff and students in conjunction with local Seventh-day Adventist congregations and pastors and the college student body has made a most effective contribution to the student literature evangelist ministry of the Columbia Union.

The Hartland Bible Conferences (formerly known as Firm Foundation Conferences) have brought thrilling Bible-based revival meetings to churches as far apart as Hendersonville, North Carolina; Sacramento, California; Apison, Tennessee; Rome, Italy; Coventry, England, and Bankstown,(Sydney) Australia. Many Adventist Book Centers stock the Christian works published by Hartland Publications.

Such co-operation is as God has ordained. We are therefore alarmed when we hear some in self-supporting work offer the view that God can work only through that arm of His work, and others in denominational employment express the opinion that self-supporting institutions are a haven for fanaticism and off-shoot activities. Of course, examples of mistakes both within denominational institutions and those of the self-supporting operation are easy to identify and even enlarge.

But one principle of God's blessing must never be forgotten. His blessing rests alone upon those who prayerfully follow His will. In this principle is no stipulation related to denominational or self-supporting administration. We have witnessed God's miracles working in both spheres of His work.

Russell saw the miracle of God's grace in restoring Bangkok

Adventist Hospital to its rightful place following the restoration of true Sabbath observance in the institution. (See the book *Teeming Fields* by Russell and soon to be published by Hartland Publications for the full story of the amazing chapter in the history of this significant mission hospital) Colin can testify to God's many miracles in the establishment of Hartland Institute. (See *The Hartland Story* by Colin, also soon to be published by Hartland Publications.)

Similarly if we depart from God's paradigm then God, who is no respecter of persons or institutions, cannot add His blessing to our work whether the institution be denominationally operated or self-supporting. There are heresies in both self-supporting and denominational work. Indeed every problem in denominational organizations can be found in self-supporting work and vice versa. They are part of the same movement. ✓

Reasons for mistrust between the two types of church work in the minds of some are not difficult to identify. The current episodes of financial crises within our church have had far-reaching effects for both denominational and self-supporting work.

They have led some lay persons and not a few ministers to question the church authorities' ability to lead effectively in many areas and have produced a stricter scrutiny of conference policies and activities. There has been a flow on to our institutions in which many dire predictions concerning our educational and medical work have been made. Naturally some concerned about these matters have turned against church-operated institutions and looked upon self-supporting projects with increasing favor. Such institutions, they suggest, spare denominational funds and attract, usually, a group of workers prepared to accept salaries considerably below those offered to church employees. Thus they are not perceived as a potential drain upon denominational resources.

On the other hand, the dwindling levels of financial support

within the church, have led some church employees to look a little enviously towards self-supporting institutions and to cite them as the cause of their own diminishing funds. For example, one retired church pastor in a letter dated June 19, 1986, which he distributed to many church leaders around the world, asserted that self-supporting ministers "are diverting millions of dollars that should go into our church coffers . . . They are selling huge quantities of books, magazines, cassette & video tapes, etc. . . . I am sure this is taking hundreds of thousands of dollars (in time it could amount to millions) from our ABCs." Such an alarmist view does little to examine real causes and only stirs up animosities in some supporting and others opposing the workers' point of view.

But all such views overlook one important principle--any institution operated under God's plan will never lack necessary means. God will ensure that those, whether denominationally sponsored or under the leadership of God's children outside the church's direct employ, will be supplied with all necessary means to conduct the Lord's work. We can never doubt this fact. Russell found it to be true both in Thailand and Malaysia within denominational service. Colin discovered the same principle at Weimar and Hartland in self-supporting work. There is no need for one arm to look enviously at the other as if in competition for God's resources. He who possesses all is well able to supply the needs of every institution and work based upon His divine commission. Thus the view that

Today a growing number of independent ministries compete vigorously for a larger share of Adventist tithe dollars--money urgently needed for the main work of the church. (*Southwestern Union Record*, 1987),

sidesteps the issue of the nature of that which is described as the "main work of the church." To carry out the main work of the church has not been given to the organized work alone any more than it is the preserve of independent ministries alone.

The main work of the church surely is that carried out by all believers true to the precious truths of God's Holy Word. None should be in competition for money.

While in Thailand, Russell received various monies from overseas believers for designated purposes. Much was tithe funds sent to be passed to the Thailand Mission for its ministerial budget. Other sums were donated for the work of the Adventist Disaster and Relief Agency (ADRA) to assist its work for the Cambodian refugees. Others sent donations for independent ministries such as Project Asia, also engaged in refugee ministry. Many other projects were the recipients of overseas donations. These included the Friends of Thailand, an organization of missionary wives who cared for the concerns of needy believers, and the independent missionary work carried on by Kent Gregory in the north of Thailand. Obviously, as president of Bangkok Adventist Hospital, Russell could have found a ready use in his denominational institution for every cent of those donations. But Russell never coveted these funds and gladly passed them on to their designated recipients. Each organization, whether denominationally operated or independent, was making its own unique contribution to the "main work of the church", and God, in His great love, did not forget those in His denominationally operated institution in Bangkok. We too were amply supplied with all necessary means including \$US2,000,000 for a new hospital wing, which came primarily from monies donated in Thailand with a little from overseas. Indeed our largest individual donation, \$62,500, was given by a member of our Chinese Church in Bangkok. My only fear was that we would be untrue to God's commission and as a consequence God could no longer meet our needs.

The opposition of some conferences to self-supporting work can be traced back to the first decade of this century when, despite numerous testimonies from Sister White admonishing against such conduct, some conferences did all in their power to

discourage financial support for Madison College, a self-supporting institution in Tennessee. Sister White counseled:

Some have entertained the idea that because the school at Madison is not owned by a conference organization, those who are in charge of the school should not be permitted to call upon our people for the means that is greatly needed to carry on their work. This idea needs to be corrected. In the distribution of money that comes from the Lord's treasury, you are entitled to a portion just as verily as are those connected with other needy enterprises that are carried forward in harmony with the Lord's instruction. (Letter written by Sister White to Professor Percy T. Magan, academic dean, Madison College, March 4, 1907).

This letter, and other little known Spirit of Prophecy material, certainly strike a chord quite different from the thoughts of some of us in denominational work today.

Again, Sister White stated:

I appeal to our brethren in South Dakota to help in this emergency, and make a liberal gift to the Madison School. (Letter written by Sister White to Elder E. G. Hayes, president of the South Dakota Conference, February 5, 1907.).

Even the General Conference did not understand the principle of liberality to self-supporting work. In order to control the solicitation of funds, the General Conference committee passed the following resolution:

Resolved, that any special enterprises for which donations are solicited from the people should first receive the sanction of the General Conference and the union conference in which such enterprise is undertaken. And that any person sent out to solicit such donations first receive suitable credentials from the union conference from which he comes, and that satisfactory



arrangements be made, certified in writing, with the union and local conferences in which he wishes to solicit before he enters upon his work. (Reported in *Review and Herald*, May 14, 1908.)

Sister White quickly responded to the enactment of this resolution in terms which are unmistakable in their intent:

When I read the resolutions published in the *Review*, placing so many restrictions upon those who may be sent out to gather funds for the building up of institutions in needy and destitute fields, I was sorry for the many restrictions. I can but feel sad, for unless the converting grace of God comes into the conferences, a course will be taken that will bring the displeasure of God upon them. We have had enough of the spirit of forbidding.

Representations have been made to me of a work that does not bear the divine credentials. The prohibitions that have been bound about the labors of those who would go forth to warn the people in the cities of the soon-coming judgments, should every one be removed. None are to be hindered from bearing the message of present truth to the world. Let the workers receive their directions from God. When the Holy Spirit impresses a believer to do a certain work for God, leave the matter to Him and the Lord. (Letter written by Sister White to officers of the General Conference, May 26, 1908.).

Only four months earlier Sister White had written very strongly on this matter. As ministers we need to prayerfully read this communication and ponder its implications for us today:

To those in our conferences who have felt that they have authority to forbid the gathering of means in certain territory I now say: This matter has been presented to me again and again. I now bear my testimony in the name of the Lord to those whom it concerns. Wherever you are, withhold your forbiddings. The work of God is not thus

to be trammelled. God is being faithfully served by these men whom you have been watching and criticizing. They fear and honor the Lord; they are laborers together with Him. God forbids you to put any yokes upon the necks of His servants. It is the privilege of these workers to accept gifts or loans that they may invest them to help in doing an important work that needs to be done. This wonderful burden of responsibility that some suppose God has placed upon them with their official position, has never been laid upon them. If men were standing firm on the high platform of truth, they would never accept the responsibility to frame rules and regulations that hinder and cramp God's chosen laborers in their work for the training of missionaries. (Letter written by Sister White to those bearing responsibilities in Washington and other centers, dated January 6, 1908.).

A careful reading of these words will also indicate implications in areas other than institutional fund raising.

In obedience to this counsel from God's servant, at the General Conference Session in 1909, the last at which Sister White was in attendance, it was voted to support the self-supporting work and to offer close co-operation with it. Among the recommendations was the following:

That endorsement be given to those [self-supporting institutions] selected, who need financial assistance, that those from whom funds are solicited may know whom to assist. (General Conference Bulletin, 1909.).

There is little reason to doubt that if God's servant lived today her counsel would not be altered.

Two other misunderstandings among our ministers are fuelling this unfortunate tension between denominational and self-supporting institutions. One is the accusation that "most independent ministries do very little, if anything, to reach the lost out in the world." (*Southwestern Union Record*, 1987), and the

other is the assertion that, in general, the messages of these independent ministries are legalistic and perfectionistic. This latter view was widely circulated in the letter of June 19, 1986, to which we previously referred.

The charge that most independent ministries are concerned with messages for the church rather than the world demonstrates a shallow examination of these far-flung ministries. Between the two of us, we have labored on four continents and have had the privilege of visiting two more. We can only state that the weight of evidence contradicts this evaluation.

At Hartland, large numbers of non-Adventist patients receive a godly witness and baptisms have resulted. Each college student is continuously involved in outreach programs and cannot graduate unless success has been achieved in such witnessing. The vast majority accept the role of literature evangelism and are proven soul winners while still students. At Enton Medical Center over 95 percent of the new patients come from outside our church. Over three quarters of these had never so much as heard of the name Seventh-day Adventist previously, much less our message. We have seen the witness of self-supporting Country Life restaurants to thousands of unbelievers in England, France, and the United States. In Thailand the work of the independent ministries largely focused on non-Christians. Thus this charge is entirely unfounded. Thousands have been won to Christ and His church by independent ministries.

Yet there is a God-given ministry to God's flock also, many independent ministries have not eschewed. At a time when the greatest assaults are being made against God's people and His message, it would be delinquent of any child of God if he did not defend the faith:

It behooves every soul whose life is hid with Christ in God to come to the front now, and to contend for the faith

once delivered to the saints. Truth must be defended and the kingdom of God advanced as they would be were Christ in person on this earth. (*Pacific Union Recorder* December 17, 1903.).

While it is true that Christ ministered to Samaritans, Greeks, and Romans, He did not neglect His ministry to those who were part of God's church. Nor should we. Thus we have both felt constrained to acknowledge God's truth in such programs as the Hartland Bible Conferences which have uplifted those segments of God's Word which have been assaulted by withering attacks. Here self-supporting and denominational preachers link hands in establishing the children of God in the Advent faith.

As ministers we must not overlook the fact that undoubtedly in many conferences a greater proportion of the organized church's means is used for purposes related to its own members. There are, no doubt, valid reasons for this fact as we see an epidemic loss of faith, particularly among the youth. However, Russell was alarmed when he read the published budget for one conference in the South Pacific Division where only two percent of the funds was set aside for evangelism. This allotment, of course, rather minimized the picture, for undoubtedly ministers undertaking outreach programs had their salaries apportioned from remaining funds. But we believe that neither group need point fingers in this matter, and we would do well to fairly evaluate the witness of men and women on fire for the Lord in independent ministries.

The charges of doctrinal aberration seem to be passing back and forth between some in independent ministries and some in denominational employment. On the one hand the former charge that many in the organized work have accepted the new theology or higher criticism, with their emphasis upon the view that man cannot obey God's law even when possessed of His power, that Christ entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly

sanctuary at the time of his ascension and that Christ bore the human nature of unfallen Adam. On the other hand, some denominational workers lay the charge of legalism and perfectionism at the feet of those involved in independent ministries.

In this matter we must state that documented evidence in this respect favors the view of those in independent ministries. This book would not have been necessary had not the new theology ravished many of our institutions, nor would many of the independent ministries have been established had those in our educational and medical institutions remained true to the specific instructions given by the Lord. Sufficient has been written on this matter in other chapters of this book. Those of us in the ministry must rise, however, against a growing trend to silence the voices of those proclaiming truth while error proceeds unabated. No ecclesiastical authority has a God-ordained commission to silence the proclamation of truth nor the condemnation of error. Indeed as ministers we fall far short of our calling should we permit other men to restrain us from fulfilling our ordination vows:

Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. (Ezek. 3:17,18).

The charge of legalism and perfectionism does not bear close scrutiny. It is a smoke screen used as an offensive weapon by those who no longer believe in or practice God's command to keep His commandments.

Nevertheless, even in these matters all truth is not with independent ministries nor all error in denominational institutions. In October 1986 Russell had the privilege of visiting one of our

truly great denominational colleges, Spicer College, in Poona, India. There are hundreds of our workers from the Southern Asia Division, the East African Division and the Far Eastern Division as well as elsewhere, in training. There the beautiful truths of the Seventh-day Adventist message are taught in their purity by both overseas and national professors. It was Russell's privilege to receive a request to lecture to the Master of Arts class in religion upon the Bible subject of perfection. In this lecture no element of Satan's counterfeit--perfectionism--was included. The following day Russell again was offered the privilege to lecture, this time to the final year ministerial students. On this occasion the requested topic was the nature of Christ. It was a matter of immense joy to find professors and students alike rejoicing in the clear truths of Scripture. We pray that Spicer College may ever testify to such precious truths.

/ In concluding this examination of institutionalism there is one obvious matter which needs mention, for we ourselves have often fallen under justified condemnation in this matter. There is a tendency to see the institution as an end in itself rather than a God-given means to spread the gospel. This trend has led us to fill many of our medical institutions with non-Adventist staff despite the divine admonition:

/ It is the purpose of God that a health institution should be organized and controlled exclusively by Seventh-day Adventists. (CH 401).

( It is of the utmost importance that harmony exist in our institutions. Better for the work to go crippled than for workers who are not fully devoted to be employed. It is unconsecrated, unconverted men who have been spoiling the work of God. The Lord has no use whatever for men who are not wholly consecrated to His service. (MM 207).

Russell ministers in an institution which falls far short of these directives. Many non-Adventist workers have given valuable and dedicated service, yet it cannot be expected that they

would be able to contribute to the spiritual mission of the institution. These people were originally employed because we confused the preservation and expansion of the medical institution with its mission. It is the latter which needs to be our primary goal. The only way to now fulfil this aim is to covenant with the Lord to replace all who resign from the staff with dedicated church members. God, who has given this instruction, will not fail us in supplying those needs which are compatible with His requirements. In the meantime we should demonstrate the greatest love and appreciation for the services of those non-believers who continue to serve our patients well. Some of these may yet join the family of the redeemed.

We pray that every pastor and church leader will use his influence in directing all our institutions back to their distinctive God-ordained characters so that they may become effective instruments to finish God's work. We earnestly trust that no further schism will be permitted to be developed between those employed in denominational lines and those in self-supporting institutions but that each will value the God-ordained ministry of the other as they work hand in hand for the proclamation of the end-time message to the world.

## Chapter 19

# SEPARATIONISM

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**A**n alarming trend, growing at a rapid pace, is a movement towards separation from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This movement is not new. We have seen it in the past, with many offshoots around the world. Almost inevitably these offshoots have had considerable merit and truth, and in some instances such as the European reform, there is no question that as a church, we share considerable guilt for the events in Europe which led to the formation of the Reformed Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The last days are going to be exceedingly confusing where every wind of doctrine will blow within the church. We are convinced that Satan has his deceptions for those who are of a liberal bent of mind and even more subtle deceptions for those whose tendency is towards upholding the basic truths of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. Indeed, Satan needs much stronger deceptions for this latter group because already those who have trampled upon the purity of God's truth are in his army.

The current separationist movement has arisen out of frustration and deep alarm at the widespread apostasy within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the deplorable drift from the high, pure and holy standards that God has upheld for His people. The questions are often asked, Can this indeed be God's church? Is the church able to be restored to a position whereby God can use it for the finishing of His work? We must frankly admit that, if it were not for the clear word of inspiration, we would seriously consider the merits of the



separationist movement. But we believe that both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy do not allow for separation from the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Frequently Sister White identified Laodicea with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and she specifically stated that there will be those who will accept the straight testimony of the True Witness to Laodicea. Such people will give the loud cry of the third angel and will be fit for translation.

My attention was turned to the company I had seen, who were mightily shaken....They had obtained the victory, and it called forth from them the deepest gratitude, and holy, sacred joy. (1T 181).

It [the testimony to the Laodiceans] was designed to arouse the people of God, to discover to them their backsliding, and lead to zealous repentance, that they might be favored with the presence of Jesus and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel. (2 SG 224).

Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcame, be the price what it may, have headed the counsel of the True Witness, and they will be fitted by the latter rain for translation. (2 SG 226).

There is no other church after Laodicea. Indeed, all the counsel that we receive from the servant of the Lord tells us that, like no other church in the history of the world, the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be assailed by Satan in his last desperate effort to derail the final, climactic salvation acts of Christ. He will do everything to destroy from the face of the earth all who have a deep and abiding trust and relationship with God. But for the protective hand of our heavenly Father, none would be left to witness to the character and to the salvation of our God. Inspiration tells us that there will be a falling away in these last days (2 Thes. 2:3), that there will be a form of godliness that denies the power thereof (2 Tim. 3:5), that there will be those who

...will not endure sound doctrine but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Tim. 4:3,4).

Many of those who are espousing separation today are basing their calls upon the erroneous teaching of Joseph Bates, that the church of Laodicea will not go through to the end and indeed salvation will come to those in Philadelphia. This belief Sister White never confirmed, although all the high qualities of all the seven churches will be found within the last generation. Also the wickedness portrayed in all seven churches will be found in those who will eventually depart from the faith and give credence unto doctrines of devils.

The separationist movement, though perhaps not organized, is to be found not only in the United States, but also in other parts of the world. It usually centers around a false concentration upon the meaning of the church. While it is agreed that the church will go through, the question is asked, "What is the church?" One very important definition given by the servant of the Lord that is inevitably misused is the statement that the church is the true and faithful of all ages. This of course, ultimately is the true church. Only those who have been true and faithful throughout this world's history will be in the eternal home. However, far more frequently in both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, the church of God is spoken of as containing defective and wayward people who are claiming to be His children. For example, in both of the epistles to the Corinthians, we have the salutation,

"To the church of God in Corinth" (I Cor. 1:2; II Cor. 1:1).

As we read the messages to the Corinthian believers we find that all sorts of abominations and corruptions are taking place within the church. In like manner, Sister White spoke to the Seventh-day Adventist church, recognizing its defectiveness

and its terrible apostasy. This apostasy, she said, will increase until the end of time.

One matter is certain; those who are preaching separation from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, are hoping for a utopia before God has said it will come. It is not for us to separate from God's church, but rather for God to separate the chaff from the wheat. God is preparing His true church. As we travel around the churches of the world, we recognize that in every church these are the true and faithful, who are studying and earnestly preparing themselves for the coming of the King. While it is clear that these are a small minority, yet nevertheless we recognize that it will not be by numbers that the work of God will be completed.

Colin, while on the educational committee of a local conference in Australia some years ago, was somewhat amused by a statement made by the then conference president. When the president saw the irresponsibility of many of the members in meeting the accounts that they owed to the school, in spite of the lavishness of their own life style, he said, "You know, years ago, we taught that the 144,000 was a literal number. But, as the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church increased, we began to question whether the number was literal. Now, when we see the way some of the saints behave, I wonder if we have yet reached a total of 144,000 saints." We do not want in this book to get into the theology of the 144,000; nevertheless, the point made by the conference president may have much relevance to us. The clear evidence of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy is that only a small minority of those fellowshipping with the people of God will be ready to meet the tests and trials ahead and stand firm for the Lord in the final crisis.

This fact has led many to argue that if the overwhelming majority of Seventh-day Adventists, including many at all levels of our work, apostatized, it doesn't make sense to believe that this church will go through. Surely the faithful will be disfellow-

shipped and of course, subsequently become the butt of the persecution of the church. They point to the fact that this is exactly what has happened to other churches and that the faithful have had to leave these churches whether it was the Catholic Church or the churches of the Protestant Reformation. But all this is human supposition and speculation. It is not supported by the Word of God. The Lord makes it plain that the church will appear as if it is about to fall, but it will not fall, that the remnant of Israel will be saved.

This significantly leads to further questions, "What about the organization and the institutions of the church?" we are asked. We are not here to speculate concerning that upon which Inspiration does not give clear indications. However, we do know that in the final crisis of the world, our institutions will be closed and indeed that the time will come when all God's faithful will be in the strongholds of the earth, in mountain caves and other hiding places hiding from the wrath of Satan. It is hardly likely that we will be worshipping in palatial churches or our children will be educated in well-equipped educational facilities, or that we will be operating sophisticated hospitals at that time. But the real structure and organization of the church is not in brick and mortar but surely in the men and women who compose the organization. God has given us clear evidence that eventually He will bring those leaders to the fore, whom He can trust.

Every wind of doctrine will be blowing. Those who have rendered supreme homage to science falsely so called will not be the leaders then. Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not keep pace with the light. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work, few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. The Lord

has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal. They have not had the light which has been shining in a concentrated blaze upon you. But it may be under a rough and uninviting exterior, the pure brightness of a genuine character will be revealed. (5T 80,81).

In vision Sister White viewed a ship that was commanded to meet the iceberg head on. She witnessed it shudder from stem to stern after the terrible impact but all on the boat went through to safety. (1 SM, 205, 206). This is not the time for God's people to jump into the icy waters of the Arctic. One cannot survive for long in those waters. If ever there has been a time for God's people to stay with His church, it is now. We are not to remain silent, however, nor to accept passively the apostasy that is rampant. Men and women under the controlled power of the Holy Spirit will call sin by its right name. They will give the trumpet a certain sound. They will fearlessly, in the love of Christ, stand though the heavens fall. They will remain true to principle as the needle is true to the pole. Surely God's embattled church needs men and women of unwavering loyalty more than at any time in human history.

## Chapter 20

# PATERNALISM

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A multitude of traps have been prepared to ensnare God's people from the divinely appointed task of completing the work of the proclamation of the three angels' messages. We as ministers and leaders of church congregations are in a strong position to influence God's people to follow the divine plan. But all too often we base our judgments upon secular principles or principles totally destructive of the plan and purposes of God.

We have drifted towards governmental paternalism. Whenever we fail to uphold the God-ordained separation between church and state, the state always assumes a paternalism that leads to fatal control.

We illustrate this peril in our midst by reference to the alarming erosion of the doctrine of the separation of church and state. We have been warned:

In the movements now in progress in the United States to secure for the institutions and usages of the church the support of the state, Protestants are following in the steps of papists. Nay, more, they are opening the door for the Papacy to regain in Protestant America the supremacy which she has lost in the Old World. And that which gives greater significance to this movement is the fact that the principal object contemplated is the enforcement of Sunday observance. (GC, 573).

With such a warning no clear-thinking Sabbathkeeper would take any step which would lead to the inevitable abrogation of the fourth word of the Decalogue and the enforcement of Sunday observance. Yet, little by little, we are breaking down this

wall of separation by our taking of state funds for our educational system.

The example of our own homeland (Australia) illustrates this process. We emphasize that it is we in the ministry who stand condemned, for we are in a position to stem this tide and many of us rather have facilitated the passage of motions which have led to state interference in the conduct of our schools of Christian education.

In 1961 Pastor F. G. Clifford, then president of the Australian Division (now the South Pacific Division) prepared a statement on the issue of state aid to our schools which embodied our true teaching on this matter. His paper was endorsed by the division committee and circulated to newspapers in order that our stand should be heard and understood. This statement is quoted since it indicates how well our people examined the implications of this issue.

Seventh-day Adventists believe in civil government as divinely ordained to protect men in the enjoyment of their material rights and to rule in civil things and that in this realm it is entitled to the respectful obedience of all. We also believe it is the right of every individual to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience provided that in the exercise of this right he respects the equal right of others.

Seventh-day Adventists are opposed to grants from public funds to support schools operated by any religious organization. They are opposed because of the principle of separation of church and state.

It is dangerous to the state since it gives to the sectarian schools money which should be used in the public schools. It is dangerous because it could lead to a violation of clause 16 of the Federal Constitution which reads:

'The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion or for opposing any religion and

no religious test shall be requested as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.'

It is dangerous to the church since it might subject the church to interference and control by the state and lead to dictation regarding the manner in which church schools are conducted. It withers away that private support of religion which should be the mainstay of all religious institutions.

Public schools are maintained by public funds; it is there that education is provided for all children without religious bias. The state should not be called upon to support schools which protect and advance the interests of special groups.

The educational system the public can be properly called upon to support is the public school system over which the public has full control. To such schools a child from any family is free to go without embarrassment because of his religious background. (Statement Adopted Australian Division Committee Meeting, September 18, 1961.).

Notice that this statement perceptively indicated the danger to our church of the acceptance of state aid to our schools. It was seen that it would lead to interference by the state. Even more important was "the principle of the separation of church and state." Yet seven years later under different chairmanship the Seventh-day Adventist Church breached that principle by accepting state aid for church schools in Australia.

A few years earlier we, from conviction, had willingly signed a petition circulated by the Australasian Division opposing state aid to denominational schools. When one church official was asked to explain the sudden change in position he honestly replied, "Russ, it was so easy to reject state aid when it was not offered." Colin told a division leader that he had, without consent of the signers, nullified their petition.



In 1968 a series of articles appeared in the *Australasian Record* in an endeavor to turn the opinions of God's people so that the acceptance of state aid by our church would be seen as acceptable. It was admitted that the state aid was only offered in an effort to buy the political support of the members of the Roman Catholic Church.

It has been stated that the Roman Catholic Church has been foremost in pressing the government to make grants to assist them in their church work. This is undoubtedly true, and has possibly caused a change of attitude on the part of the government towards religious bodies. If the government for reasons best known to itself decides to bow to this pressure and makes grants to the Roman Catholic Church, this is certainly not a reason why Seventh-day Adventists should not also accept money for their church. (*Australasian Record*, November 18, 1968).

Assurances were made to the church membership at large promising that no grants were accepted if they had strings attached.

Furthermore, these voices have been heeded, and no gifts from whatever source are accepted that would cause the church to change its function of proclaiming the unadulterated gospel.

It is for this reason that some government grants have been steadfastly declined, that offers of payment of salaries to teachers have been refused, that any grant carrying with it some compromising condition has not been accepted. (Ibid.)

In 1968 in contact with the Minister of Education for the State of New South Wales, Colin was informed that, while the minister hoped that there would be no subsequent strings attached to state aid, obviously a present government could not tie the hands of a subsequent government. Therein lies the

danger.

The matter was very soon put to the test for one of our schools in the Western Australian Conference was inspected by state authorities. These inspectors concluded that the school library contained too little fiction and the college administration would need to "upgrade" their library by the addition of volumes of fiction. We failed the test. Rather than refusing to violate our principles, we filled the library with "good" fiction and thus retained our state aid funds. Undoubtedly Pastor John Keith, president of the Trans-Commonwealth (now Trans-Australian) Conference, who with Pastor George Burnside, alone on the division committee opposed the acceptance of government funds for our schools saw the crux of the problem. He had held a two-dollar note over his eyes as he stated, "Brethren, the reason you can't see the real issue is that there is too much of this in front of your eyes." (\*The two-dollar note is the most commonly used note in Australia.)

It is of note that initially care was taken to refrain from accepting state aid for teacher salaries. The reasons were specified. A further reason suggested orally was a most practical one. If state funds were used for operational expenses and these funds were withdrawn at a future date, the whole church education system would be in jeopardy as no doubt people would have ceased to see their own obligation in providing funds for the education of their children.

However, another matter was also offered as a reason.

We are very cognizant of the fact that, much earlier in our mission history, grants were received from the government for payment of teachers' salaries, and the end result of this, in a very short time, was that in our own schools we had individuals teaching Bible who were not even Seventh-day Adventists. Such a thing should never have been allowed to take place, and with the safeguards which we have written into our committee

actions, these things will not and cannot possibly recur.  
(*Australasian Record*, November 18, 1968.).

Well, the impossibility did recur. Little by little church authorities felt that they could well use funds for operating expenses. The first step was to use such funds for two purposes alone--the salaries of relief teachers and for removal expenses for teachers transferring to other schools. But we did not stop there. Eventually it was agreed that government funds could be taken for teachers' salaries providing the conference had two years of salary in reserves in case the government discontinued its aid. Thus step by step that which we so nobly opposed, we later supported. Eventually some state aid was even appropriated to pay portions of the salaries of a conference president who also held the post of conference educational secretary and the conference treasurer, since he disbursed the government monies to the schools. Some state-aid funds were used to construct a youth campsite in one conference since, it was reasoned, our church schools sometimes used the youth camp for retreats.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church received such a disproportionately large grant for its school in the national capital, Canberra, that a Roman Catholic member of the House of Representatives protested publicly on the matter, claiming that we were favored above those of his persuasion.

The changed policy of our church in Australia has not passed un-noticed. Colin, when on furlough in Australia some years ago, was contacted by a lawyer who requested to dialogue with him. This lawyer was taking the matter of state aid to the High Court of Australia on behalf of a group known as DOGS (Defense of Government Schools). The DOGS membership was largely made up of humanists and agnostics who objected to the use of government funds for parochial schools. To Colin's amazement he found that DOGS had recovered from the Victoria State Archives an 1899 petition signed by many Seventh-day Adventists stating their opposition to state aid. The first

signature upon the petition was that of Pastor Arthur G. Daniells, who was appointed president of the General Conference two years later. They possessed a copy of an Australasian Division minutes (circa 1962) which recorded the decision that the divisions would never accept state aid. In addition, Colin was presented with a number of newspaper clippings recording the opposition of our church to the acceptance of state aid. Such materials are easily obtainable from computerized newspaper records. Our complete about-face on the matter of state aid in Australia is a matter not only of disregard of principle, but also of intense humiliation in the face of a contemptuous public.

Satan will stop at nothing to destroy the divinely appointed educational and medical system of our church. By accepting state aid we are placing ourselves in a perilous situation, for most surely the state will continue to encroach on the liberty of the institution. Already it has occurred. Although the South Pacific Division (as the Australasian Division is now called) has not counseled upon this matter with the church membership, on November 27, 1986, its executive committee approved the Avondale College's report to the Schools Commission of New South Wales. In this report the college authorities after "preliminary discussions between the college and the commission" agreed to "a board structure which represents a significant shift, both in membership and in method of appointment, from that which has previously functioned since the college was founded." The composition of the proposed board of 23 members ominously includes one member nominated by the vice-chancellor of an Australian university, one member nominated by the principal of a [state] College of Advanced Education, one member nominated by the chairman, one from Lake Macquarie Shire (a shire is an approximate equivalent of a county) Council (Shire Council--the local government body in the area of Avondale College's locality) and one member nominated by the New

South Wales Minister for Education. While at the time this book goes to press, this proposal has not been completely implemented, it is tragic that we should agree to such an arrangement.

Unquestionably if such a board is confirmed, it will lead to the demise of Avondale College as an Adventist institution. It will simply become a community college run by Seventh-day Adventists--a far cry from God's plan that Avondale should be the model for our educational institutions worldwide. Here is documented government interference of a most serious kind, yet how few are the ministers sounding the alarm. Brethren, we have a God-ordained duty in these matters. The "gift" of state monies is a gift that costs us dearly.

In the United States we have followed just as blindly. The annual council in Mexico City in 1972 yielded to the pressure of the colleges to accept government grants and loans for students. Not even the Religious Liberty Department was united in its opposition. In so doing, the church only regularized what most colleges were doing without church authority. The claims that it was money to students and not to the institutions was soon exploded by successive court rulings that the institutions accepting such student aid were liable to meet all Federal government titles relating to education. The "strings" were already well attached.

In 1968 Colin predicted that rather than helping the finances of our institutions, state aid would place them in a greater financial predicament--a prediction fulfilled in colleges in both Australia and the USA. In countries as far apart as Trinidad, Grenada, Pitcairn Island, Fiji, Sri Lanka and Nigeria, the dangers of accepting state aid have been experienced. Surely now we can learn this painful lesson that our church is not in any way to be tied to the government.

## Chapter 21

# IMPERFECTIONISM

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**T**oday we hear much assault upon the doctrine of perfection, especially from ministers and leaders in God's church. It is hard to believe that among Seventh-day Adventists there could be such a discrediting of the great call of the gospel to victory over sin. It is fair to report that the large majority of ministers with whom we have dialogued do not now believe in the power of Christ to give victory over every wrong word and action. They do not believe in an all-powerful God but in a God as impotent as was Baal on Mount Carmel. There is no question that we are not all serving the same God today. Within the Seventh-day Adventist Church there are many serving a god whom they claim cannot, or does not, or will not offer, victory over sin. Constantly those who believe in the clear testimony of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy are labeled perfectionists.

It is essential to know the difference between perfection and perfectionism. Some years ago when Colin was interviewed on one of our college radio stations. The interviewer, a well-known supporter of the new theology and a member of the college's theology department, asked him why he and his brother supported perfectionism. Colin was quick to point out that under no circumstances did he believe in perfectionism as a principle of salvation. He explained that perfectionism was based upon the concept that human works merited salvation. But he was equally quick to point out that God has promised perfection to every one who has placed his life in the hand of Christ. Perhaps it is important here to share some of the great words of Scripture

and of inspiration:

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. (Jude 24).

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (Titus 2:11-14).

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Cor. 5:17).

For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (2 Cor. 4:11).

(Notice that this text does not refer to the immortal life but to this present mortal life).

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3:18).

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. (Heb. 12:14).

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (2 Peter 1:4).

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,

perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Cor. 7:1).

✓ Awake to righteousness and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame. (1 Cor. 15:34).

/ This last text is of particular importance, for it challenges us to cease from sin. Would God call upon His people to do the impossible if He was not able to provide the power to give victory? Such demands are unthinkable. And yet many who stand in our pulpits encourage our people in their sin and offer to them the hope of salvation in their state of carnal security. How tragic the consequences of the false teachings of these ministers who assert that we will continue to sin until Jesus comes! The consequences will be souls lost from the kingdom of heaven; men and women eternally without salvation. How dare we as ministers accept the frightening responsibility of doing the work of Satan in helping men and women to prepare for eternal destruction? In talking with Mary Magdalene, Christ made a challenge similar to that of Paul:

And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more. (John 8:11).

This challenge was comparable to the command Jesus made to a man whom He had healed:

Afterward Jesus finds him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee. (John 5:14).

What a fearful statement this verse would have been if God did not have the power to give victory over sin! Does God mock His people? No! He not only commands that we be victorious, He offers through His death and ministry the power for such victory as well. Paul was fully aware of this truth:

( There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with



the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Cor. 10:13).

The issue that confronts us is "Do we really believe our God is able?" Are we prepared to trust the faithfulness of our God? It is a heartbreaking reality that increasing numbers of both ministers and laity no longer believe in the power of Christ in their lives. Through the pen of Sister White we have many statements confirming the scriptural call to righteousness and victory over sin. These solemn warnings to ministers cannot be lightly set aside if we would stand clear in the judgment:

Those who have been regarded as worthy and righteous prove to be ringleaders in apostasy and examples in indifference and in the abuse of God's mercies. Their wicked course He will tolerate no longer, and in His wrath He deals with them without mercy. (5T 212).

What a solemn challenge to every sincere minister! The work cannot be finished without Christ's victory in the lives of His people:

Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost. (5T 214).

Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God—candidates for heaven. (5T 216).

Some ministers feel that it is compassionate and redemptive to encourage our people to feel that they are still saved when

they are continuing in their waywardness. Yet we have the reality that such will not only live in their sins but they will also die in their sins. Note the warning given by the servant of the Lord:

Let no one say, I cannot remedy my defects of character. If you come to this decision, you will certainly fail of obtaining everlasting life. The impossibility lies in your own will. If you will not, then you cannot overcome. The real difficulty arises from the corruption of an unsanctified heart, and unwillingness to submit to the control of God. (COL 331).

In 1904 God's statement was even stronger:

In the day of judgment the course of the man who has retained the frailty and imperfection of humanity will not be vindicated. For him there will be no place in heaven; he could not enjoy the perfection of the saints in light. He who has not sufficient faith in Christ to believe that he can keep him from sinning, has not the faith that will give him an entrance in the kingdom of God (RH Mar. 10, 1904).

Our dear fellow ministers, we stand just as awed by these statements as you do. We recognize how imperfect our lives have been, how inexcusable have been our own failures before God and how many must have been hurt by our failure to fully and completely surrender our lives to Jesus. But nevertheless the challenge before us is to press on and follow in the provisions and power of God.

Some ministers believe that those who preach in the power of God to give victory over sin do not acknowledge the grace of God. But this assertion is far, far from the truth. We believe in twice as much grace; grace not only for justification but also for sanctification. Only faith in the sacrifice of Christ can truly sanctify (see Acts 26:18; Eph. 5:25-27; Heb. 10:10; Heb. 13:12).

It is interesting to note that only once does Sister White talk on the issue of perfectionism:

God will not entrust the care of his precious flock to men whose minds and judgment have been weakened by former errors that they have cherished, such as so-called perfectionism and Spiritualism, and who, by their course while in these errors have disgraced themselves and brought reproach upon the cause of truth. Although they may now feel free from the error and competent to go forth and to teach this last message, God will not accept them. (EW 101,102).

Now some have seen this statement as a clear indication that we will not be perfect. However there is a full understanding of what was held to be fanaticism and perfectionism in those early days after the disappointment of 1844:

They held that those who are sanctified cannot sin. And this naturally led to the belief that the affections and desires of the sanctified ones were always right, and never in danger of leading them into sin. In harmony with these sophistries, they were practicing the worst sins under the garb of sanctification, and through the deceptive, mesmeric influence were gaining a strange power over some of their associates who did not see the evil of these apparently beautiful but seductive theories. (COL 301).

It is obvious that though the term is not used here, these early believers had accepted the same deception that the people in Indiana had at the turn of the century. They held to holy-flesh concepts. It is important to distinguish perfectionism from the issues of perfection. Scores of statements are made by the servant of the Lord concerning God's call for perfection. On no occasion is there the slightest deviation from the call of God that, through His power, His people will develop a perfect life. This perfectionism has nothing to do with holy flesh or the thought it

preserves one from the possibility of subsequent sin.

Those who understand the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy principles of perfection realize that it is always a dependent perfection, a perfection that is constantly sustained as we totally, moment by moment, retain our connection with Christ. If we do not do so, we will be quick to fall and to return to our ways of sin and unrighteousness. Indeed, those who have, by the power of Christ, gained victory, will never consider themselves worthy. Even after the close of probation, they will know that Christ alone is worthy. And when He returns they will cast their crowns at His feet singing "Worthy, worthy is the Lamb" – the One alone who has the rightful claim to worthiness. No one would boast of sinlessness or perfection. Indeed, a perfect man would be unaware his perfection always realizing that he is totally unworthy, as is clearly brought out in the experience of Job. The Bible attests to the fact that he was perfect:

And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil? (Job 1:8)

In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. (Job 1:22).

However, Job was not aware of this divine evaluation. Indeed, it was entirely different from his own evaluation of himself:

If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me; if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life. (Job 9:20,21).

The difference between the evaluation of heaven and one's understanding of himself is remarkable. The moment that anyone claims to be perfect or to live without sin is the surest sign that he is still in the camp of Satan. Therefore it is not

proper to ask, "Is there anyone perfect?" or "Are you perfect?" for such questions belong only to God. They do not belong to human lips.

Some have been confused over the relationship of maturity to perfection. God does not call for absolute maturity because that would require a development beyond any human possibility. However, He does call for us to be maturing in perfection:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. (Eph. 4:13-15).

At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. (COL 65).

Some have referred to sanctification as a lessening of imperfection, but the servant of the Lord says it is

...a progression from one stage of perfection to another. ✓  
(ML 250).

God is calling us to grow in the knowledge and nurture and admonition of the Lord. This perfection is not of man--no one could boast, for if he were to boast, he would immediately by that very boast commit sin. The difference between the saved and the lost is that the saved believe that they are unworthy (Matt. 25:35-40), whereas the lost believe they are worthy. (Matt. 7:21-23).

There are many who have been turned away from the bibli-

cal doctrine of perfection because they are afraid it will take their focus off Jesus. Colin, after preaching on the subject of perfection learned that one of the listeners had said,

"The preacher could not have been right today because if I were perfect I would not need a Saviour."

/ How wrong was this deluded Sister! Certainly we do not need a Saviour to continue in sin, but we do need a Saviour to keep us from falling. That is the very essence of Jude 24:

/ ...unto Him that is able to keep you from falling.

Indeed for those who are seeking to represent the Lord and to witness for Him, there is the realization that if they are marred or defective in their character, they could not give an authentic witness to the final message to be given to the world. The Lord could not entrust them with the power of the Holy Spirit, for many would turn away because of the flaws in the character of the messenger, disdaining to hear the message. The purpose of perfection is not to glorify man, but to uphold the power and promises of God.

Those who seek to walk in the ways of the Lord will never look to self, for they have tried too many times and failed as many times in their own efforts. They realize that of their own selves they can do nothing, but with God all things are possible. They know that Christ alone can give them power and that power must come to them moment by moment and day by day. They know that if they take their eyes off Jesus they will fail and fail miserably. They understand that the strength, the power and the victory is all through Christ, by His death, resurrection, and ministry. The issue turns men and women to Christ rather than away from Him.

Let us not preach the doctrine of imperfectionism. Unlike the error of perfectionism that we are sanctified and cannot sin, the error of imperfection is that we will be saved in our sins. Both are satanic delusions. If ever there is a challenge to the ministry,

it is to uphold the power as well as the love of Christ, to preach that He is able to keep men and women from falling into sin and that He will not allow them to be tempted above their endurance but will make a way of escape. The stakes are extraordinarily high--eternal life or eternal death. We urge our fellow ministers to recognize that they cannot stand clear in the judgment unless they preach this message and do everything they can to bring our people to a knowledge of both the power of God and His call to follow in His ways. Every minister should study the "Law" of salvation to be able to share it with his members, for God has declared,

The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity. (Zeph. 3:13) ✓

## CHAPTER 22

# CRITICISM

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**F**requently we mistake the ministry of reproof for criticism. Rarely do we make the alternative error, except in analyzing our own statements. All too often we claim that our own biting criticisms are noble reproofs. How can we distinguish these two very different entities? In answering this question the example of Jesus naturally comes to our minds. Let each pastor re-read the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. Here Christ issued the most scathing rebukes recorded in Scripture. Seven times He rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy. Five times He accused them of being blind, indeed fools and blind on two of these occasions. He described these false shepherds as serpents, a generation of vipers and as whited sepulchers. Few, if any, modern-day reformers would dare to resort to such descriptions, even of those who have manifestly led Christ's flock astray.

Without doubt those who bore the brunt of Jesus' rebukes interpreted them as destructive criticism. Indeed, so repugnant was this message to those to whom it was directed that the vast majority turned the more against Jesus and deepened their resolve to destroy Him. Would we as Pastors have responded any differently? Yet this was the most loving reproof ever meted out to shepherds of the flock. It was not a critical tirade but an urgent pleading, a last cry to men who had accepted a divine calling, urging them to return to that divine commitment. This reproof was presented with a voice full of tears and a heart overflowing with love. With a broken heart Christ concluded



His ministry of reproof with the words:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! (Matt. 23:37).

Thus the distinction between biting criticism and the ministry of reproof often does not rest in the subject matter of the speaker or author, but in the motive and the spirit in which it is given. In truth, we would suggest that at times only the Lord is arbiter between the two, for He alone knows the hearts of men.

Today criticism is more common than reproof. Many ministers are quite critical of their conference presidents or others in authority over them. Yet, the sincerity of our criticism is seen by our use of quite different terms when face to face with these men. Since they have our upward mobility in their hands it is amazing how we can mute our concerns in their presence. We have heard ministers, even leaders, privately bitterly criticize General Conference decisions and then one week later, when representatives of that organization were present, promote the very matter that had appalled them. Brethren, this should not be. Yet if we all honestly examined our souls, who among us is guiltless of such conduct?

Perhaps an even more serious danger is that many of us mute our concerns for fear of the condemnation of men. Where we should have given strong reproof we have remained silent, persuading ourselves that to do so is an act of "love" and "understanding." But such silence is neither. It springs from a heart of selfishness where we place our own reputations before God's commission to us in order to please a Laodicean church.

It is true that to issue the rebuke even from a heart of true love will, in all probability, cause the majority of those receiving the reproof to rise up against it. After all, Isaiah, Jeremiah and John the Baptist won no popularity polls among their listeners.

But such reproofs are aimed at the very few who are true at heart and will respond to them. The lesson we all must learn is to accept reproof irrespective of our position or from whom it comes, and without judging the motives of the giver.

Moses' example in reproof is pertinent to us. It teaches us many lessons.

When Moses, on returning to the camp, confronted the rebels, his severe rebukes and the indignation he displayed in breaking the sacred tables of the law were contrasted by the people with his brother's pleasant speech and dignified demeanor and their sympathies were with Aaron. To justify himself, Aaron endeavored to make the people responsible for his weakness in yielding to their demand; but notwithstanding this, they were filled with admiration for his gentleness and patience. But God seeth not as man sees. Aaron's yielding spirit and his desire to please had blinded his eyes to the enormity of the crime he was sanctioning. His course in giving his influence to sin in Israel cost the lives of thousands. In what contrast to this was the course of Moses who, while faithfully executing God's judgments, showed that the welfare of Israel was dearer to him than prosperity or honor or life. (PP 323).

Modern Israel differs little from that in ancient times. Today most of the church members sitting in our pews prefer the Aarons to the Moseses. And many of us mold our ministries to suit the desires, but not the needs, of our flock. In this way we become popular and "successful" ministers. Many of us have forgotten one little two-letter-word in the English language—NO. No, this is not our standard! No, that doctrine is not found in Holy Writ! No, God does not approve! Rather, we compromise with the eternal destinies of God's people rather than offend them by use of the word NO. How else can we explain the ever-widening gulf between the standards of our spiritual forefathers and the church today,

between the doctrines they cherished and those we now espouse. Were our founders in error in their stand for total abstinence from alcoholic beverages? Were they unscriptural in forbidding the adulterous party in a divorce to remarry? Were they befuddled when they suggested that Scripture taught that Christ entered into the Most Holy Place in 1844 to commence the investigative judgment? Was it because of their lack of a university degrees that they asserted that a soul filled with the Holy Spirit could obey every one of God's commands? Was it simply a desire to be different from the evangelical churches which led them to preach for almost a century that Christ came to this earth with a fallen nature?

All these declining standards and doctrines and many more could have been averted if men, filled with the Holy Spirit, had risen up and said, "NO!" As God's men, let us not dare to refuse to shoulder our burden to present this ministry of reproof. Eternity is at stake.

Further, we would implore our fellow pastors to refrain from criticism of those of their number who have dared to take up this burden. Surely the mark of the True Witness to the church of Laodicea is that of reproof and restoration. But today many who fearlessly have stood for God's truth have become the objects of the most withering criticism by their fellow laborers.

In our own homeland our hearts have ached as we have seen such men of God cut down by the criticism of their fellow workers. How well we recall the heartache caused by the circulation of a letter to each conference minister banning two pastors from speaking in their pulpits. One was a man of 86 years who had given over 60 years of earnest service to God's church. The other had won more souls to the truth of God than any other in the division. Their only ecclesiastical "misdemeanor" was that they had declared the new theology to be in error as was their beholden duty as watchmen on the walls of Zion. Yet our sorrow and sympathy, great as it was for these two unsung

heroes of the faith, fell even more on the shoulder of the conference president who issued the ban. While we do not doubt that he felt his action was in the best interest of God's church, clearly he was totally misguided. We must all one day give an account for such actions. Surely those accepting such a terrible accountability need our earnest prayers and counsel. For God is a God of forgiveness and our rebukes must aim at redemption.

Today in Australia (and in a few other areas) we see men who have faithfully offered a ministry of reproof blacklisted in our churches. Some have had their credentials withdrawn. Others have been the victims of scathing criticism. When they have attempted to fulfill their ministries in a Christlike fashion they have been thwarted somewhat by conference presidents circulating the flock, advising against attendance at their meetings. Even conference presidents who fulfill their ministry of reproof are in grave risk of losing their post to a more pleasing leader. We are not speaking of one or two doubtful senior pastors. We are speaking of a whole generation of ministers who have each given decades of service in God's cause. No longer will their fellow pastors tolerate their voices in their midst. Brethren, this should not be! It must not be!

We appeal to each leader, each pastor, each church officer to reconsider such actions. These actions do a disservice to God's cause and demean our own ministries. Never, never let us be the ones who mistake reproof for criticism, holy grief for anger or the spiritual love of souls for disloyalty to God's church and its leadership. To harbor such spurious assessments is to flaw the work of God and to destroy the ministries of others.

## Chapter 23

# FEMINISM

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**F**uelled by the sociological revolution of the post Second World War era, the feminist movement has all but destroyed the traditional, and more important biblical, relationships between men and women. Home life has been, assaulted in such a way that many of our youth no longer exhibit those secure patterns of life that once enabled them to bridge the gap between the learning years of childhood and the productive years of adulthood. The role confusion seen between men and women has also placed stresses upon marriages. In a previous era this type of stress was virtually unknown.

As far as the United States is concerned, the women's liberation movement is not new, for in the 1860s a most disruptive women's rights movement swept the nation. However, it did not reach the level of the present-day movement, and by the latter part of the century had all but disappeared. We do not deny those valid issues that have fuelled the women's liberation movement. These include pay disparity, discrimination in the job market, and male abuse of women. But in the women's movement we see much that is counterproductive and even self-destructive of the very goals the movement seeks to achieve.

We grew up in an atmosphere where it never entered our heads that women might be inferior to men. We were almost 15 years old when our sister was born and possibly, as a result for us a mystique developed around women. If our attitude was to be faulted it was in the view that women were far superior to

men. We were taught by our mother to treat girls with a respect and courtesy that set them apart from and above males. Today we see little of that, and it is our suspicion that there is more wife abuse, more disrespect of women, and a greater confusion of the position of women in society.

Colin, as a psychologist and educator, and Russell as a physician, have frequently observed the tragic results of role confusion. We have no question that it has contributed to the high incidence of homosexual and lesbian life styles as children and youth no longer see clear role models of masculinity and femininity from in seniors. When we hear of the "Mr. Moms" where father stays home to care for the children and mother goes out to work, we are not left in doubt as to the confusion in the minds of impressionable children.

We sense a rapidly increasing tendency within the church for mothers to express discontentment and even resentment toward their motherly role. More and more, often spurred on by unholy, materialistic goals, mothers are leaving their children in the hands of others from an early age. Few mothers recognize that their role is the greatest role that God has given to humanity. Critical though the roles of the minister and the Christian school teacher are, they are of a lower order than that of the mother.

There is a God above, and the light and glory from His throne rests upon the faithful mother as she tries to educate her children to resist the influence of evil. No other work can equal hers in importance. She has not, like the artist, to paint a form of beauty upon canvas, nor, like the sculptor, to chisel it from marble. She has not, like the author, to embody a noble thought in words of power, nor, like the musician, to express a beautiful sentiment in melody. It is hers, with the help of God, to develop in a human soul the likeness of the divine. (MH 377, 378).

Just as mothers are frequently abdicating their God-given responsibilities, so too are many fathers:

As the priest of the household, he is accountable to God for the influence that he exerts over every member of the family. (CT 128).

Where are the godly priests and patriarchs of the home who tenderly care for the spiritual as well as the intellectual and the physical needs of their families? Often the father has all but deserted his leadership in morning and evening worship and spiritual teachings. As ministers we must not only be the spiritual leaders of our homes, but must also teach the men of the church the sacred responsibilities God has placed upon them as the spiritual destiny of their families.

But the issue that we wish to address primarily is the role of women in the church. Easily many worldly-minded church members have followed the trend of society and of fallen churches (though some of these have taken a vastly more biblical approach than many in God's remnant church). We are not interested in man-made arguments, but in what the Word of the Lord says on this issue and with which we hope our readers will agree.

It is worthy of comment that the movement within our midst to ordain women has not been one which follows a deep study of God's Word. Rather, it arises out of the popular trend in the world about us. Before the secular, godless world aroused such issues, they were not matters of the least consideration in our midst. It is never a safe practice to base a policy upon that which the world, unsanctified by God's Spirit, demands. To subsequently feverishly search for divine confirmation is bound to lead to a misuse of inspiration and a straining of the evidence to fit the preconceived desire. Such has been the sorry course of women's rights in our church. Any survey of the world field would find an overwhelming majority of our church sisters who opposed the ordination of those of their sex, since they wish to follow Bible order.

In 1975 Colin was a member of a General Conference ad hoc

committee that was addressing issues to be presented to the General Conference quinquennial session to be held in July in Vienna. Subcommittees were set up to review various issues. He was stunned when the then General Conference vice president, Elder Willis Hackett, asked him to preside over the subcommittee on the ordination of women. He pleaded for mercy, but Elder Hackett insisted. When the group of ten or twelve met, Colin suggested that the only valid approach was to search the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy to determine the word of the Lord. To this the subcommittee agreed. Being at the General Conference headquarters, the committee had the resources of the White Estate at their disposal.

When the subcommittee reassembled, the members reported no biblical evidence for women's ordination as elders or pastors though much evidence for their active participation in the spiritual mission of the church. From the Spirit of Prophecy only one statement was found that the subcommittee members felt they must address. It reads as follows:

Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be set apart for this work by prayer and laying on of hands. (RH, July 9, 1895).

It will be noted that this was part-time service and that it is in the context of an article dealing with how laity can support the work of the minister.

While the passage in nowise referred to ordination and frequently the laying on of hands is not associated with ordination (e.g., the laying on of hands for the sick), nevertheless, the subcommittee recommended to the full committee that consideration be given to the ordination of women to the office of deaconess. The sub-committee pointed out that there was no divine counsel to support the ordination of women elders nor women pastors. Our report was poorly received and two (now



retired) General Conference leaders expressed their adamant conviction that we must move to implement the ordination of women elders. Colin was shocked that all but one other sub-committee member in addition to himself altered their "convictions" under this pressure and voted to recommend the ordination of women local elders.

Though this recommendation was not implemented at this time, the pressure has since intensified. In spite of the consistent failure of the General Conference to endorse the ordination of women pastors, there has been a steady increase in their appointment. Further, the appointment of women elders has brought great grief to God's church and terrible division. There has ever been a minority who have fueled this movement despite the lack of divine counsel. Some who have supported this practice are genuinely unaware of the problems it creates. It has been pointed out that there is no "Thus saith the Lord" *against* the ordination of women. Some feel that the lack of a specific statement against the ordination of women makes it an open issue to ebb and flow with sociological changes. But it is not so.

We could, in dealing with this issue, use such texts as

ordain elders in every city, as I have appointed thee: if any be blameless, *the husband of one wife*. (Titus 1:5,6 -emphasis added).

However, we realize that there are those who feel that this is a generic use of the male and who claim that the intent of Paul's statement is to guard against appointment of bigamous elders. Although we do not agree, and will move in another direction.

The fall of man resulted in a redefinition of the relationship between men and women:

Unto the women he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband,

and he shall rule over thee. (Gen. 3:16).

While some have questioned the details of 1 Cor. 11:3-15, 1 Cor. 14:33-35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-15, each clarify the principle that leadership in the church has been given by God to men but not to women.

There are those who openly declare that times have changed. Though women elders and pastors would not have been acceptable in the male-dominated societies of the past, the contemporary societal climate is ready for this move. But such shallow research ignores the fact that during the Egyptian captivity, generations of Israelites saw the sociological pattern of women priestesses as well as priests. It ignores the fact that many of the Canaanites around Palestine also had male and female priests. Pagan nations of the past were replete with society after society which had "ordained" female priestesses. But God's people were never authorized so to do.

That surely leads us to the reason there for. Already we have explored the invasion of Augustinian paganism upon Christianity in the chapter on Evangelicalism. The pagans, building their religious concepts upon the Satanic balancing of the cosmic forces within the Universe, have created male and female gods and as counterparts, male and female priests. For 6,000 years this depth of paganism has been resisted by all God's people and even by fallen Christian churches. This movement may be Satan's master stroke to destroy the purity of God's church and the basic fabric of home life. We must do all we can to resist this further pagan intrusion into God's church.

But if we have any doubt as to God's attitude to the women's rights movements, these are dispelled by divine counsel:

Those who feel called out to join the movement in favor of women's rights, and the so-called dress reform, might as well sever all connection with the third angel's message. The spirit which attends the one cannot be in harmony with the other. (1T 457).

This strong statement is not of human origin. Rights movements feed the egocentric selfishness that lies at the base of every satanic deception. It is a God-commanded responsibility for each of us to expend every effort to liberate the repressed. We cannot be Christians if this ideal is not our commitment. But when the oppressed, or those that feel oppressed, seek to fight for their own perceived rights, there are grave dangers that hatred and selfishness will be fed.

It will be noted that the women's rights movement of the 1860s was also associated with a movement where women were encouraged to dress more like men. The present-day movement has gone further to the point where often women buy the same pants as men. But even where women wear that which is similar to men's clothing they stand against the solemn statements of inspiration. In the 1860s some Adventist sisters thought it appropriate to adopt the American costume (a uniform-type coat that came well down over pants – somewhat like a pants suit). But God did not approve:

I saw God's order has been reversed, and His special directions disregarded, by those who adopt the American costume. I was referred to Deuteronomy 22:5: "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God." God would not have His people adopt the so-called reform dress. It is immodest apparel, wholly unfitted for the modest, humble followers of Christ. There is an increasing tendency to have women in their dress and appearance as near like the other sex as possible, and to fashion their dress very much like that of men, but God pronounces it abomination. (1T 457).

As Christians we cannot interpret this counsel in the light of societal standards. As ministers we must educate our women away from clothes similar to male clothes. We must be alert to

the fact that much of fashion is dictated by the ungodly, and that it is well known that many designers are lesbians and homosexuals. Especially must it be repugnant to God to see slacks and yes, even shorts, worn in the house of the Lord. Every secular study we have seen has shown that the closer women dress like men the greater the incidence of immorality and rape. Women lose their godly reserve. No wonder Sister White wrote:

A person's character is judged by his style of dress. A refined taste, a cultivated mind, will be revealed in the choice of simple and appropriate attire. Chaste simplicity in dress, when united with modesty of demeanor, will go far toward surrounding a young woman with that atmosphere of sacred reserve which will be to her a shield from a thousand perils. (ED. 248).

One thing is certain that, in Western countries, modest dresses are the most appropriate garments for Christian women seeking to fulfill God's counsel.

Sometimes as ministers we push upon our women members roles which they do not covet. No dedicated Seventh-day Adventist woman desires to hold a post in God's church for which she finds no divine mandate. This fact is illustrated by an episode in one church in our homeland. When the pastor desired to ordain the deaconesses he was confronted by sweet Christian women who declined the positions. Since this refusal was found to be the wish of the large majority, the pastor was compelled to withdraw his intention for these sincere women were unwilling to accept that for which they found no divine authority.

In many overseas countries the ordination of women would cause serious misunderstandings and divisions in our midst. It is even so in the United States and Australia. We cannot but reflect upon the fact that many who would hold back the proclamation of Bible truths on the false ground that such

doctrines cause disunity among the flock, for they offend the liberal element of the church, feel no such burden when it comes to the matter of grave schisms caused by the introduction of unscriptural concepts among God's people.

Today we see those who, irrespective of God's Word, seem driven to pursue woman's ordination. There are leaders as well as others in North America who want to go ahead irrespective of whether it would place a schism in our world church. Some women "pastors" urged on or at least supported by their senior pastors have caused grave division in the church by performing baptisms. Tragically, such events have led many sensitive souls to question the integrity of the church to the pure streams of truth. We are aware that few have recognized the rank pagan origins of woman priests, yet we cannot but raise our voices against this wholly unscriptural practice. Surely in this area the Lord is calling us back to the upright position of distinction from the world.

The centrality of the feminist movement to contemporary pressure for the ordination of woman was underscored by observations in an Australian newspaper.

The reappraisal of institutionalized religion by feminists, and feminist-influenced church, synagogue and mosque-goers has been underway in its present form for 30 years. (Sydney Morning Herald, August 27, 1987)

The article then quoted from Australia's only woman theologian as saying that

She sees the scriptures as being so conditioned by the patriarchal nature of society at the time they were written that their language and underlying assumptions about society are . . . sexist. "I suppose the Bible is going to have to be phased out; it is a post cultural-language," she says. (Ibid.)

Not only is there no scriptural basis for the ordination of

women, but pressure in this direction will continue to cast doubts upon the inspiration of God's Word. Surely God's faithful servants cannot yield to yet another satanic deception. In Australia the Anglican church has been split so that a separate communion has been formed. Such could also result if the determined effort of feminist activists succeed in their unrelenting pressure to impose their unscriptural goals upon God's remnant church.

We do see the dynamic God-given role of women in the finishing of God's work. To ignore women would be to ignore 60 percent of the church's work force. Women have just as much soul-winning potential as men. Their roles as teachers, prophetesses, Bible workers, and even preachers are well defined in inspiration, but never as elders nor pastors. God made men and women equal, but this equality must never be confused with the concept of sameness. God gave divinely appointed roles to His beloved daughters. It is the duty of God's shepherds to uphold these roles and never deign to lower the lustrous calling of our women members by offering them duties God has never blessed.

It was a woman who was inspired to testify:

She was perfectly happy in her Eden home by her husband's side; but like restless modern Eves, she was flattered that there was a higher sphere than that which God had assigned her. But in attempting to climb higher than her original position, she fell far below it. This will most assuredly be the result with the Eves of the present generation if they neglect to cheerfully take up their daily life duties in accordance with God's plan. (3T 483).

A neglect on the part of woman to follow God's plan in her creation, an effort to reach for important positions which He has not qualified her to fill, leaves vacant the position that she could fill to acceptance. In getting out of her sphere, she loses true womanly dignity and nobility. (3T 484).

## Chapter 24

# UNIVERSALISM

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**S**urprising as it will be to many readers, the seeds of Universalism have been sown for a long time by some in our own ranks who have wrested the Scripture to serve their own theological viewpoints. Universalism is the concept that all will be saved. Even the fallen angels and Satan himself will ultimately be saved, according to this false theory.

It views this far, yet universalism is the logical end-point to the belief of many who presently would abhor such a teaching. The concept that God's people sin until the return of Jesus leaves only two logical alternatives. One of these alternatives is that God predestines some to eternal salvation and some to external destruction. The second is that God will ultimately save all.

Those who, like Augustine, accept the view that salvation is an objective act of God apart from and independent of human response, must believe that God pre-ordains the eternal destiny of each human being. Given Augustine's failure to perceive the power of Christ to secure victory as well as forgiveness in the life, yet believing that some will be saved and some lost, predestination is a logical conclusion from this false premise.

On the other hand, there are those who have rejected the Augustinian premise that Christ is our substitute but not our example and while supporting the role of Christ as our example, deny the substitutionary aspect of Christ's ministry. This view, often referred to as the moral influence theory, has gained steady support among many who oppose evangelicalism in the Adventist Church.

The concern of the moral influence supporters is legitimate. They emphasize the vindication of God's character as central to the issue of the great controversy. However, in so doing, they emphasize the love of God to the increasing exclusion of the justice of God. They acknowledge Christ as man's supreme example, they recoil from the substitutionary concept which they perceive as portraying God as blood thirsty, requiring a blood sacrifice to appease His anger in much the same way that the pagans seek to appease their gods.

Christ's sacrifice, however, was not made to appease an angry God. Rather Christ's sacrifice demonstrated God's limitless love for a rebellious creation. In the universal laws of God, sin brings the inevitability of eternal death. Following man's fall, Satan claimed the imprisonment of men in sin and death. The perfect life of Christ and His victory over death alone gave man a freedom from sin and death that could be achieved by no other means.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (1 Cor. 15:20-22).

Without Christ, man is eternally helpless and lost. But he has been invited to look upon the crucified Lord and live. Jesus became our Substitute that we might have eternal life.

For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (Matt. 26:28).

But the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. (Heb. 9:23).

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (Heb. 9:28).

And ye know that he was manifested to take away our



sins; and in him is no sin. (I John 3:5).

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. (Acts 20:28).

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Peter 1:18,19).

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (I John 1:7).

About forty days after the birth of Christ, Joseph and Mary took Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord, and to offer sacrifice. This was according to the Jewish law, and as man's *substitute* Christ must conform to the law in every particular. He had already been subjected to the rite of circumcision, as a pledge of His obedience to the law.(DA 50, emphasis added).

Paul was deeply anxious that the humiliation of Christ should be seen and realized. He was convinced that if the minds of men could be brought to comprehend the amazing sacrifice made by the Majesty of heaven, all selfishness would be banished from their hearts. He directs the mind first to the position which Christ occupied in heaven, in the bosom of His Father; he reveals Him afterward as laying off His glory, voluntarily subjecting Himself to all the humbling conditions of man's nature, assuming the responsibilities of a servant, and becoming obedient unto death, and that death the most ignominious and revolting, the most shameful, the most agonizing—the death of the cross. (4T 458).

The unbalanced emphasis of the moral influence theory

upon the love of God has rather naturally led to the concept that God does not destroy. Stimulated by the desire to dispel the rampant misconceptions that God is arbitrary and harsh, these adherents emphasize that God is the Author of salvation and Satan is responsible for destruction. To the surface student, these arguments can sometimes be persuasive. After asking such questions as "Would God break His own law?" "Would God steal?" "Would God commit adultery?" they ask "Would God kill?" No distinction is made between the intent of the commandment "Thou shalt not murder" and the rightful exercise of punishment for evil doing.

The proponents of the "God does not destroy" philosophy use one statement in particular from the Spirit of Prophecy.

God destroys no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself. (COL. 84).

In spite of the fact that this statement is specifically addressing cause and effect relationships and human responsibilities, it is misused to support the "God does not destroy" error.

Many, especially of those influenced by the "soft" love sentiments of our generation, have become strongly attracted to this new "insight." We have discovered that few see the ultimate end of such a concept. But Satan is leading them down a pathway one step at a time. Some are now beginning to reach the bottom.

The question is "If God does not destroy, then who does?" We have heard variant answers to this question. Some, based upon the passage in *Christ's Object Lessons* quoted above, reason that man destroys himself and postulate that at the end of time he creates a super nuclear device to destroy the New Jerusalem, but in turn it engulfs the world in a flaming inferno. This speculation is intriguing, but hardly consistent with the clear testimony of Scripture.

And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved

city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. (Rev. 20:9).

Such a view fails to explain the destruction of the world by the flood, or Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone.

Many others attribute all destruction to Satan. But even this has difficulties. It is true that in the sense of ultimacy Satan stands responsible for all the carnage in the universe, yet at the time of the Flood we are told that

Satan himself, who was compelled to remain in the midst of the warring elements, feared for his own existence. (PP, 99).

Some, in explanation of this statement, have said that Satan was responsible but his destructive act got out of control. In the final destruction of the wicked, it is said, Satan is responsible for the destruction of the evil angels and human beings. In desperation it has been said that Satan then commits suicide. But none of these explanations can be found in Holy Writ.

Others have explained the "God does not destroy" theory by suggesting that God does not destroy, He simply removes His life-sustaining power from the wicked. But this theory creates other problems, for surely to remove His life-giving power is to acknowledge that God has indeed destroyed the wicked.

In a desperate effort to uphold this false view of the love of God, some who hold that God does not destroy have reached the logical conclusion that ultimately all are saved—even Satan. Universalism has come in through the back door by way of an apparently innocent heresy. Such a conclusion places the viewer in the position that, like the new theology, man's victory in Christ is not relevant to his salvation. Some new-theology advocates do, however, agree that by divine election some are saved and some are lost. The universalists conclude all are saved. ✓

Most exponents of the new theology do not extend their views to predestination despite the fact that it is a logical exten-

sion of their unscriptural premises. In point of fact the Calvinistic superstructure of their views is identical with that of the proponents of predestination. But for accuracy of record we state that these men and women believe that acceptance of Christ as their Saviour will ensure their salvation despite their failure to gain, entirely in God's power, victory over sin.

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. (Rom. 5:18).

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim. 2:4).

For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. (1 Tim. 4:10).

Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he? (1 Cor. 10:22).

But the Word of God plainly states that, while salvation is provided for all, yet there are clear conditions for the bestowal of God's grace. Some of these conditions are set forth in the following passages of Scripture.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16).

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. (James 1:12).

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? (James 2:5).

But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,

neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (1 Cor. 2:9).

For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him. (Isa. 64:4).

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. (2 Tim. 4:8).

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. (Prov. 28:13).

Some have become so obsessed with the view that God does not destroy that they have said that unwittingly Moses received the sacrificial services from Satan, for he could not discern between the God who gave him the Ten Commandments and the deceiver who ordered animals sacrificed. The deception goes on and on. One might ask then why Abel's sacrifice and not Cain's was accepted by God.

But let us look briefly at inspiration. We do not have to remind the reader that many times God destroyed according to Biblical testimony. The statements are clear. One that might be helpful is

And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created. (Gen. 6:7).

It would be the ultimate in inconsistency to agree that God was the Creator and deny that He was the Destroyer of the antediluvian world. In addition, there are some other statements of inspiration that cannot be lightly put aside.

A single angel destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians and filled the land with mourning. When

David offended against God by numbering the people, one angel caused that terrible destruction by which his sin was punished. The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits. (GC 614).

But Korah and his companions rejected light until they became so blinded that the most striking manifestations of His power were not sufficient to convince them; they attributed them all to human or satanic agency. The same thing was done by the people, who the day after the destruction of Korah and his company came to Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." Notwithstanding they had the most convincing evidence of God's displeasure at their course, in the destruction of the men who had deceived them, they dared to attribute His judgments to Satan, declaring that through the power of the evil one, Moses and Aaron had caused the death of good and holy men. It was this act that sealed their doom. They had committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin by which man's heart is effectually hardened against the influence of divine grace. (PP 405. See also Isa. 28:21; Gen. 19:13,14; Deut. 29:23; Ezek. 16:49,50; Jude 7; Rev. 14:9-11. EW 221, 5T 209, 212, GC 539, 543, GC 627-628, PP 628).

Just as the children of Israel attributed the judgments of God to Satan, today many are doing likewise. This sin is most serious. God is love, but He is also just.

Some confronted with such incontrovertible evidence testifying to God's acts of destruction have suggested yet another modification of the theory. These state that since the first death does not last for eternity and is thus spoken of as a sleep, God has at times been author of such deaths. However, God does not destroy, we are told, in the second death. That, it is suggested, would be an abrogation of His love. Those employing this

theory cannot refer to the sixth commandment as evidence that God does not destroy, for unquestionably this commandment does apply to the first death in appropriate circumstances. Further still, the evidence of Scripture unequivocally testifies to the fact that God does destroy in the second death. (Rev. 20:9). Satan experiences only the second death. God says about the destruction of Satan:

By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou has corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more. (Ezek. 28:16-19).

Unless we deliberately misconstrue the most precise words of Scripture stating that God will cast Satan out, God will destroy Satan, God will cast him to the ground, God will bring forth a fire from the midst of Satan and God will bring him to ashes there can be no dispute on this matter. This is the annihilation of Satan, for he shall never be any more.

Fellow ministers, never confuse and mislead God's flock by constructing theories based upon your own imagination, theories for which "explanation" after "explanation" is required in order to destroy the straightforward testimony of our God. Such efforts are matters of great peril and inevitably lead to

satanic delusions.

/ The justice of God in destroying the wicked, sometimes referred to as His strange act, when correctly understood, is just as much an act of love as is His salvation of the righteous. Without the presence of God, should they live, they would be embroiled in unrelenting misery. The view that such will be eventually taken to heaven is totally inconsistent with God's character. Either God would continue to permit them free choice, in which case they would perpetuate the reign of sin and suffering, or else God would have to deprive them of the power of choice, a manipulation that is totally inconsistent with God's character.

The present is a most perplexing time. God is calling His followers to follow His word and not devise new human interpretations of God's plan of salvation. To the discerning Christian the destructive acts of God will be seen in the light of His re-creation and restoration of harmony in the universe. Thus, and thus only, can the universe be at peace for eternity, for the whole aim of the plan of salvation encompasses the eradication of sin and unrepentant sinners.

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## Chapter 25

# LIBERTARIANISM

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**W**hile students at the University of Sydney during the late 1950s, we were first confronted with the concepts of libertarianism. Having grown up in the rather sheltered environment of a devout Adventist home, and having after the fourth grade attended only a Seventh-day Adventist school and college, we were not a little shocked by the immoral concepts being espoused by the members of the Libertarian Society. Our shock was not so much at immorality *per se*, as we were well aware of its existence, but by the open flouting and proclamation of the "rightness" of their cause. To this point in our lives we had felt those engaged in such behavior were at least sensible enough to remain silent about it.

Of course, over the last quarter century a revolution has occurred that has swept aside, except for the most deeply committed Christians, almost every semblance of morality. In a 1987 survey by *USA Today* the disclosure was made that only 6 per cent of brides under 25 were virgin brides. Yet 35 per cent of women over 40 were virgins when married. (*USA Today*, August 7, 1987). If women over 60 had been surveyed the percentage would have been much higher and over 80 years of age very much higher still. Such revelations as these would have been shocking a generation ago, but hardly rate a raised eyebrow in today's permissive society.

If the Seventh-day Adventist Church were markedly different, what a witness it would be to the world! But, sadly, every moral problem in the world is to be found in the church, from

pre- and extra-marital sex to masturbation, homosexuality, lesbianism, incest, bestiality, divorce, and abortion. Both of us have to say that in most of these issues, we have firsthand knowledge of these forms of immorality not only in the lives of church members, but also in the lives of significant numbers of men called to be workers and pastors in the church.

There is no doubt that Satan is especially directing his desperate attacks against God's church members, but his efforts are even more intensified against those called to leadership, knowing full well that to compromise the moral fiber of ministers and leaders will have two great consequences:

(1) to paralyze the minister so that he cannot preach the straight testimony nor reprove, in love, those who themselves have fallen.

(2) to discourage his church and family when his evil ways are discovered.

Somehow, with the decline in moral standards in the world, it appears as if God's people have become satisfied to be "a little better" than the world. What a glorious moment this could be in God's church if its members were to allow the Lord to possess their lives fully so that Christ could clothe them with the righteousness of His purity!

In many respects we have a chicken-egg question. Did the breakdown of moral standards in the church lead to the sudden grasping of the new-theology concepts of Augustine or did the taking hold of this satanic error lead to the breakdown of morality in the church? We think it has gone both ways, but sense that the deeper issue is that a major segment of the church drifted away from the truth of the Word that underpins the very existence of His people. In so doing we have separated ourselves from the Source of divine power. There can be no sanctification without truth:

✓ Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth....And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be

sanctified through the truth. (John 17:17,19)

But alarming as the immorality is, how much more alarming is the condoning of such degenerate sins in the church! Today, not only is "love" the summum bonum of Christianity, it is the platform by which all Christian discipline and reproof is made irrelevant and even sinful.

Colin well remembers speaking at a church that had just lost its pastor because of his immorality and drunkenness. Tragic though it was, the greater alarm was that many of the members were incensed that the conference should dismiss this pastor. They had enjoyed being recipients of his smooth preaching and his "non-judgmental" positions and angrily asked, "Doesn't the conference have any forgiveness?" while declaring what a "loving and caring" pastor he was. As happens so often now, the one who has done such great hurt is upheld while those who have to take the action of discipline are the recipients of bitterness and evil murmuring.

We believe that immorality (as it is associated with a loss of commitment to God and His Word) is the greatest single cause of the fact that scores of ministers leave the ministry annually. Frankly, we wonder how many adulterers, homosexuals and persons engaged in incest are left undetected to carry on their impotent ministries in the church. We can rest assured that almost all such ministers will be wrongly perceived as very loving and understanding by those whose ears are eager to hear their own sinful lives condoned, and to cling to false hopes of eternal life for the persistent sinners.

The adultery issue has grave implications in the divorce and re-marriage tragedies so prevalent in the church. No human directive can change the undeniable statements of Scripture. Christ exploded liberal grounds for divorce when stated:

It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:but I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the

cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. (Matt. 5:31,32).

They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. (Matt. 19:7-9).

Too many pastors today are unwilling to present these testimonies clearly. There are even those who permit their own sympathies to influence them to give "ecclesiastical" authority for unscriptural divorce and remarriage. We have known dissatisfied spouses to "shop" around until they have found a pastor who will condone their sin in divorce and remarriage.

Up until the 1950s the church's stand was clear. Only in cases of adultery could a spouse remarry and retain church membership and that only if he or she were innocent of any infidelity. Under pressure, we have attempted to change the biblical principles, but this does not change the sure Word of God. Some have been bold enough to demand prominent positions in the church after openly bringing shame to themselves and to their church. Such usually gather support by demanding love and sympathetic understanding when indeed what they need is confession and forsaking of their sins. The church becomes impotent to do the work to which God has called it. The strong efforts of the late Drs. Roy O. and Marguerite Williams to alert leaders to the mistake in liberalizing the divorce and marriage stand in the church manual has so far failed to reap the necessary reform.

Pastors, we must stand upon the Word. Tens of thousands of

spouses and children have been placed in eternal jeopardy by the immorality of many who are boldly claiming the right to church membership and officership. Unpopular though it may well be, God calls upon us to stand.

The pastor who faithfully delivers the straight testimony of the True Witness, pointing out in earnest concern and true love, the sins of God's people is too often condemned and often "run" from His church. Oh, for Elijahs and Moseses today! This timidity and indulgence of pastors must be held responsible for much of the impotency in the church today:

If the presence of one Achan was sufficient to weaken the whole camp of Israel, can we be surprised at the little success which attends our efforts when every church and almost every family has its Achan? (5T 157).

Because many are losing sight of the abhorrence with which a holy God looks upon sin, we will briefly review God's counsel concerning many of these sins.

Fornication is rampant within God's church. Colin was shocked when the dean of women of one of the Colleges where he served confided to him that approximately 80% of all the girls had had sexual relations *before* entering College. One would assume that there would be a corresponding percentage of young men so involved. The tragedy is not only in the sin, great though this is, but also in the hurt, emotional wrenching, guilt, lowered self-worth and diminution in the likelihood that a subsequent marriage will be successful. While he was talking to youth at a camp meeting on these themes, two lovely 17-year-old girls thanked Colin for "telling it like it is." Then followed a tragic statement, "Neither our parents nor our teachers have levelled with us." Some have said fornication is not bad, but the Bible declares that fornicators (unconfessed, unforsaken of course) will not be in the kingdom of heaven:

Being filled with all unrighteousness, *fornication*,

wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, . . . who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. (Romans 1:29, 32, emphasis added).

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, *fornication*, uncleanness, lasciviousness, . . . envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:19, 21, emphasis added).

The problem of adultery is epidemic in God's church. Carnal men and women, with unregenerate minds are lusting like the pagans. Some even inflame their sensuality with pornographic magazines and videos. We were appalled to learn that one conference president had to rebuke some of the ministers in his conference, among other things, for renting X-rated movies for their VCRs and for attending public movie houses. As ministers we know all too well that we have to guard zealously the avenues of the soul. It is an abomination that God's people should indulge in these practices, but how much more abominable that a chosen minister of the gospel should be so engaged. We must be pure and above all blemish. The warnings of Scripture on adultery are clear:

Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbors's wife, to defile thyself with her. (Lev. 18:20).

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor *adulterers*, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, (1 Cor. 6:9, emphasis added).

Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. (1 Cor. 6:15).

We have been repulsed by the brazen attempts of practicing homosexuals to have this abominable practice accepted as appropriate among God's church members. Their goal is to obtain acceptance by the church for those who continue in this practice. Yet God has reserved some of His strongest condemnations for this practice:

Thou shalt not *lie with mankind*, as with womankind; it is abomination. (Lev. 18:22, emphasis added).

If a man also *lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman*, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. (Lev. 20:13, emphasis added).

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor *abusers of themselves with mankind*, (Lev. 6:9, emphasis added).

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that *defile themselves with mankind*, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; (1 Tim. 1:9,10, emphasis added).

And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, *burned in their lust one toward another*; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. (Romans 1:27, emphasis added).

While we are ever willing to work with homosexuals to find

God's answer to their sin, we cannot but fight with all our energy this willful attempt to destroy God's warnings and counsels.

Perhaps the most repulsive effort to infuse immorality into the remnant church has been through the issue of abortion. It is true that those who live the life of Christ will never place themselves in a position where they have to consider abortion. But our plea to those whose sin has led to a pregnancy not according to God's counsel, is that they should not add sin to sin by engaging in an abortion. We are staggered by the unbelievable activism of the pro abortionists in God's church. Some have advocated it, it seems, because the Catholic Church condemns it. Some have advocated it because they wrongly see it as a church/state issue. Some say it is a matter of choice. So are murder of an adult, theft and adultery.

It is important to note how precious the prenatal is to God:

Listen, O isles, unto me; from far; the Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. (Isa. 49:1).

Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. (Jer. 1:5).

For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. (Luke 1:15).

Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. (Ps. 139:16).

Some have said the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy are silent on the topic. If this statement were true it would be a very poor basis indeed to support the destruction of the pre-nate. But in the past the crime of abortion was considered so gross that



little needed to be said. Yet through our denominational pages, there were strong warnings against this callous practice:

The medical profession have taken a noble stand. The desolations have become so fearful that, as the guardians of human life, they are compelled to do so and society owes a debt of gratitude to Dr. H. R. Storer, of Boston, especially for his powerful arguments, lucid arrangement of facts, patient investigations and earnest and eloquent remonstrances. Among his writings on this subject, the little work entitled *Why Not?* is a book for every woman, and I wish every woman might carefully read it. But the medical profession cannot arrest the evil, and they tell me they need, and must have, the moral power of good people to aid them.

In the sight of God it is willful murder. The willful killing of a human being at any stage of its existence, is murder. . . The practice is a direct war against human society. The best good of the country, against the family order, against the health, the peace, the conscience, and the moral well-being of the mother, and against a child which could otherwise have an immortal existence.

I am sorry to learn from undoubted testimony that the practice is far more common among Protestants than among Catholics. (John Todd, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, June 25, 1867, p. 30.).

One of the most shocking, and yet one of the most prevalent, sins of this generation, is the murder of unborn infants. Let those who think this a small sin, read Psalm 139:16. They will see that even the unborn child is written in God's book. And they may be so well assured that God will not pass unnoticed the murder of such children. (J.N. Andrews, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Nov. 30, 1869, p. 184).

The idea held by many that the destruction of fetal life is

not a crime until after 'quickening' has occurred, is a gross and mischievous error. No change occurs in the developing human being at this period. The so-called period of 'quickening' is simply the period at which the movements of the little one become sufficiently active and vigorous to attract the attention of the mother. Long before this, slight movements have been taking place, and from the very moment of conception, those processes have been in operation which result in the production of a fully developed human being from a mere jelly drop, a minute cell. As soon as this development begins, a new human being has come into existence,--in embryo, it is true, but possessed of its own individuality, with its own future, its possibilities of joy, grief, success, failure, fame, and ignominy. From this moment, it acquires the right to life, a right so sacred that in every land to violate it is to incur the penalty of death. How many murderers and murderesses have gone unpunished! None but God knows the full extent of this most heinous crime; but the Searcher of all hearts knows and remembers every one who has thus transgressed; and in the day of final reckoning, what will the verdict be? Murder?--MURDER, child-murder, the slaughter of the innocents, more cruel than Herod, more cold-blooded than the midnight assassin, more criminal than the man who slays his enemy,--the most unnatural, the most inhuman, the most revolting of all crimes against human life. (J. H. Kellogg, M.D., *Man the Masterpiece*. Modern Medicine Publishing Company, Battle Creek, Michigan, 1894, pp. 423-425).

The stance of Ellen and James White is clear with their supportive quotation from Dr. E. P. Miller:

Few are aware of the fearful extent to which this nefarious business, this worse than devilish practice, is carried on in all classes of society! Many a woman determines she will not become a mother and subjects

herself to the violent treatment, committing the basest crime to carry out her purposes. And many a man who has as many children as he can support, instead of restraining his passions, aids in the destruction of the babies he has begotten. ( Dr. E. P. Miller quoted in James and Ellen White, *A Solemn Appeal*, Steam Press, Battle Creek, 1870, p.100).

Russell was well warned of the consequences of performing a non-essential abortion before his graduation from medicine in 1964. Had he been apprehended in so doing, he could have looked forward to a 5-7 year jail sentence, with his name struck forever from the New South Wales Medical Register, and with this action circulated to all the major medical registries of the world. Today many of our fellow Adventist members have a lower standard of the matter of abortion than the secular state of New South Wales two decades ago. We stand fully opposed to the large number of permissive abortions in some of our hospitals and call for our church and its ministry to take a true biblical stance against this grave evil.

Colin, as a psychologist and educator and Russell as a physician, have seen the pitiful psychological and emotional results with those who have undergone abortions. Colin has had to hear the screams of remorse and seen the tears of sorrow and guilt on many occasions. Russell has observed the 50-year-old guilt in an 81-year-old Jewish woman who aborted in Nazi Germany. Yes, sin brings tragic consequences.

We assume that no one has to be convinced of the iniquity of bestiality and incest. So our comments will be brief. We are yet to find a child, the subject of incest, who has not suffered long, possibly lifetime feelings of guilt and emotional stress. How sad these consequences are! As parents we must guard and preserve, not pervert, the little ones God has entrusted to us.

Often today masturbation is treated lightly. Frequently the counsel of Ellen White is ignored or even belittled. It has fre-

quently been referred to as reflecting the false morality of the Victorian era. Many laugh with scorn at the counsel of Ellen White. But the Word of the Lord cannot be put aside:

...both mind and body were enfeebled through the habit of self abuse. (5T 91).

Your children have practiced self abuse until the draft upon the brain has been so great, . . . their minds have been seriously injured. The brilliancy of youthful intellect is dimmed. (2T 392).

If he continues in this vicious practice [masturbation] he will eventually become idiotic. (2T 402).

Today modern science is beginning to rethink the issue in the light of relatively recent discoveries. There is a growing concern that this "harmless exploration" does have serious emotional consequences. Dr. David Horrobin of Oxford University relates the problem to zinc deficiency. He states:

The effect of zinc deficiency has particularly profound effects on the male, because extraordinary amounts of zinc are found in the testicles and the prostate gland. . . The amount of zinc in seamen is such that one ejaculation may get rid of all the zinc that can be absorbed from the intestines in one day. (David Horrobin, M.D., Ph.D., *Zinc*, Vitabooks, Inc., 1981, p.8)

Horrobin then makes these striking statements:

In humans, among the most consistent effects of zinc deficiency are changes in mood and behavior. There is depression, extreme irritability, apathy and even in some circumstances, behavior which looks like schizophrenia . . . It is even possible, given the importance of zinc for the brain, that 19th century moralists were correct when they said that repeated masturbation could make one mad! Similarly, the high livers were also correct when they said that a diet rich in oysters was necessary to compensate

for excessive sexual indulgence. (David Horrobin, M.D., Ph.D., *Zinc*, Vitabooks, Inc., 1981, p. 7&8).

Another authority, Dr. Carl Pfeiffer, put it this way:

We hate to say it but in a zinc-deficient adolescent, sexual excitement and excessive masturbation might precipitate insanity. (Carl Pfeiffer, Ph.D., M.D., *Zinc and Other Micro-Nutrients*, Keats Publishing, Inc. 1978, p. 45).

But there is another issue. Few acts are more egocentric than masturbation and egocentricity is at the root of every form of functional mental illness from schizophrenia to hypochondria.

We realize we have no doubt pinpointed the sins of some readers. We would not conclude this chapter without giving the divine counsel of hope and pardon for the overcomer:

He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. (Micah 7:19).

As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. (Ps. 103:12).

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jer. 31:34).

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. (Jude 24).

There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Rom. 8:1).

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1

John 1:9).

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (Heb. 7:25).

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (2 Peter 1:4).

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9).

A pure and sanctified ministry alone can lead God's people to victory and completion of their worldwide mission. If we resist God's power to give us victory over every hereditary and cultivated tendency to evil, then God will allow us to fall by the way and shepherds who can be trusted will be chosen to lead the flock. God cannot entrust the power of the Holy Spirit to a perverse people. Only those who have permitted Christ to give them daily victory, can be entrusted with a power greater than that of Pentecost. Only those sanctified by the truth will unite in the great final presentation of God's wedding invitation. Thus the return of Jesus is predicated upon the elimination of false themes of love so that authentic love, love which purifies and ennoble the soul leading to the keeping of commandments of God, then can flow from Christ to His children a love which is divine in origin.

## Chapter 26

# CRY ALOUD, SPARE NOT!

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**T**he words spoken by the prophet Isaiah arrest our attention.

Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. (Isa. 58:1).

Surely these words ring out with clarion tones to every minister and leader. There is no doubt that Satan is attacking the ministry of God's church with a fervor and a passion hitherto unknown. We, as the ordained ministers of the gospel, stand in terrible peril unless our lives are moment by moment hid in the life of Jesus Christ. Before us are the lives and eternal destinies of every member of our church, and indeed the destinies of our own selves and of our families. There has never been a time more difficult than today to be a true minister of the gospel. Never has it been more difficult to cry aloud and spare not, and to give the trumpet a certain sound.

Almost every agency of the church, it seems, has conspired against the faithful minister warning his congregation in preparation of the coming of the King. The church is in fearful danger from the issue of politicking within its midst. We plead with our fellow ministers, workers, and lay-leaders to cease from these worldly methods to gain power, prestige and position. Surely the politicking that goes on at all levels of our work is abhorrent to our righteous and holy God. How can it be that

men and women who claim to be the children of light seek position, irrespective of the designs of God upon their lives and service? Can they imagine standing in the judgment and attempting to explain why they have sought a position that God had never ordained, when indeed He had a ministry far greater and far more effective for them to fulfill? Surely we can trust God to work everything out according to His best will and for the greater fulfillment of our own ministry. This politicking has been enhanced by the worldly practice of looking for a bigger church at each change of ministerial assignment and of looking for conference-level responsibility.

Colin remembers well an incident that occurred when he was president of the West Indies College, Jamaica. The student-ministerial-league president asked one of the Union officers to speak on the topic, "How to Get to the Top Quickly." The answer of the Union officer was appreciated. "You are at the top when you are where God wants you to be." Surely this principle is viable for all who are leaders and workers in the cause of God.

On another occasion, when Colin was appointed president of Columbia Union College, he well remembers the sound counsel of his academic dean, Dr. Jack Blanco. "We are going to be criticized for doing right and we are going to be criticized for doing wrong; let's make sure that we are criticized for doing right." That is a wonderful principle for all to follow. But today we find an inordinate fear of criticism because of the repercussions that it brings. (This confusion levelled, not only by church leaders, but often even by our subordinates.) Because of this we frequently try neither to do that which is good nor that which is evil, but rather to remain neutral when God is calling us to be watchmen on the walls of Zion. Indeed with the on-rushing current of apostasy in the church such conduct leaves us culpable before God. To ignore problems, and to preach nothing which is controversial has similar devastating consequence to those of preaching heresy. We feed chaff instead of wheat to our



believers. How many times we have heard the sad story from church members that they are not being fed in their churches. They are hearing nothing of the great distinctive truths because these truths have been deemed to be controversial. How different from the counsel that God has given to us!

There are many precious truths contained in the Word of God, but it is "*present truth*" that the flock needs now. I have seen the danger of messengers running off from the important point of present truth, to dwell upon subjects that are not calculated to unite the flock and sanctify the soul. Satan will here take every possible advantage to injure the cause.

But such subjects as the sanctuary, in connection with the 2300 days, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are perfectly calculated to explain the past Advent movement and show what our present position is, establish the faith of the doubting, and give certainty to the glorious future. Those I have frequently seen were the principal subjects upon which the messengers should dwell. (EW 63).

This command is from God. No man rightfully can call upon a minister to abdicate this responsibility. If every minister were preaching these great messages at the behest of God, there would be far more conversions in our church and many more souls saved for the kingdom of heaven. We as ministers will stand condemned in the judgment for our delinquency, if we do not follow this counsel. Perhaps one of the most fearful warnings for the ministry is in the chapter entitled "The Seal of God" in the fifth volume of the *Testimonies*. We repeat this passage because of its telling message.

No superiority of rank, dignity, or worldly wisdom, no position in sacred office will preserve men from sacrificing principle when left to their own deceitful hearts. (5T 212).

Even more startling is the following statement:

And here we see that the church--the Lord's sanctuary--was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light and those who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God's power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief and they say: The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. He is too merciful to visit his people in judgment. Thus, "Peace and safety" is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God's people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs that would not bark are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children all perish together. (5T 211).

We appeal to our fellow ministers and church leaders to solemnly contemplate the challenges that God gives us here. Ignoring the problems in the church and preaching peace and safety are not the acts of those who love their membership. The condoning of sin is not love, but a terrible mistrust of duty. True love is costly. It earnestly seeks to warn against that which will lead to eternal damnation. It points to sin, while stressing the forgiveness of a loving God who alone can cleanse from all unrighteousness and empower all to walk in the pathway of truth and righteousness. There are those who continue to proclaim that truth divides. Indeed, it is our observation that truth has never divided God's church. Truth only points up where the errors have already divided the church. So it was in heaven. God did not introduce division and rebellion among the angels; it was Satan. But God was blamed for the problem and Satan claimed that He was arbitrary and unjust.

Those pastors and leaders who assert that those who are preaching the truth are bringing divisiveness into the church are themselves the perpetrators of division. It is well known that down through the ages so-called liberation movements have destabilized a country economically, socially, and politically and then claimed to have the answer to the problems they themselves have created in the nation. But oppression is the end result of such movements. So it is within the church of God.

Those who bring false theories into the church and who present doctrines that tickle the fancy of the hearers are the destabilizers of the church. They claim to have the answers to the problems of the church, but instead they bring death and destruction in their train.

As ministers of the gospel, we must freely admit that the Seventh-day Adventist church today is a divided house. No longer can it be seen as one unified body established upon the pure truth of God. We must recognize that we are in a civil war. We know that civil wars are bloody wars and that the carnage in the terrible battle raging in the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be tragically high. But there can be no Switzerland in this war. We either stand in the army of Jesus Christ or we stand in the army of Satan. If we are not for Christ, we are against Him. If we do not stand for His truth, we stand for error. If we do not warn the people, we are responsible for leading them to eternal destruction.

During the Second World War the infamous Norwegian traitor, Vidkun Quisling, collaborated with the Nazis. He argued at his trial that his only motive was to save Norway from bloodshed. But that did not help, as he was executed in November of 1945. Neither did it assist the leaders of the French Vichy government—Marshall Petain and Pierre Laval. Laval's life ended in execution and, but for his advanced age, it also would have been the lot of Marshall Petain, who spent his last few years in ignominy in prison.

There may be many today who are asserting that they are remaining silent in the hope of keeping peace and unity in their churches. But it will not help in the judgment ahead. We know that God will be victorious, and that His church will triumph. Unlike Laval, Petain, and Quisling, our victory is assured. We know the outcome of this great war. Now is the time for each of us to stand at his post of duty; to give the message of truth with a ring of authenticity to our people, preparing them for the momentous crisis ahead. With tears and prayer, we must bring before our people the solemnity of the messages that God has entrusted to us.

Now has come the time to reverse the changing views of orthodoxy within our church. By compromise we have permitted almost every standard of the church to falter. We have permitted the clarity of the truth to be blurred and our people are confused and, in many cases, innocent victims of the inroads of Satan upon their lives. In the Christian era, the disciples were accused of turning the world upside down. Yet what they did was to turn the world right-side up. Those ministers and leaders who will take up the challenge of God's true ministry will also be accused of turning the church upside down, but it is the only way the church can be turned right-side up so that it will be prepared to meet the Lord and be readied for the coming of the King.

We fully realize that we ourselves are weak and fallible, and that many times we have failed to give the trumpet a certain sound, that we have not always been faithful watchmen on the walls of Zion. Indeed, more than we care to remember, we have had to come before the Lord and confess our weakness, our timidity, and our failure to stand though the heavens fall.

As we pray for our fellow ministers, our church leaders, and all those given responsibilities in God's work, we ask your prayers in our behalf that together we might remain faithful, that through the power of Christ we might not be moved, ir-

respective of the circumstances that present themselves. As God's appointed leaders we want to be faithful to the commission that has been entrusted to us. May we be responsible for leading multitudes into the fellowship of Christ, ready to proclaim Him as their King and to usher in the dispensation of eternity.

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## Glossary - *Keepers of the Faith*

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The following definitions will not always be popular definitions, but they will represent the way each term is used in this book.

***Intellectualism*** - The concept that the human intellect or reason is primary to, and dominant over, divine revelation. The simplicity of the gospel is lost and faith is denied.

***Evangelicalism*** - A view of the gospel which, among other things, supports dispensationalism, the disjunction of law and grace, once saved always saved, predestination, the secret rapture of the church before the tribulation, and futuristic interpretations of Bible prophecy.

***Ecumenism*** - A concept of the reunification of the Christian church established, not upon the harmony of truth, but upon compromise, consensus, and de-emphasis of doctrine.

***Pluralism*** - The belief that there are many acceptable different ways of looking at even major spiritual truths, all of which are valid. Such toleration is considered a healthy sign of a Christian church.

***Relativism*** - There is no ultimacy, no final arbiter of truth or righteousness. All truth is relative to circumstances and to time and place.

***Existentialism*** - The concept that each person is the ultimate arbiter of truth. It is a natural extension of relativism. Each person becomes the final arbiter of right and wrong.

***Humanism*** - A concept established upon Greek paganism whereby man becomes the measure of all things. It is held that goodness is innate within every human being and that man has within himself the knowledge to solve every human dilemma.

***Secularism*** - A de-emphasis of divine inspiration and spiritual values. The Word of God is often treated more like human

philosophy, and the miraculous aspects of Scripture are either greatly diminished or denied. Often this result is achieved by claims of relevancy to the real world.

**Hedonism** - This philosophy arises out of the sophist concepts of Greek paganism. It is a view of life in which all actions subserve the dominant goal of happiness through pleasure seeking.

**Materialism** - The belief that God bestows great materialistic benefits upon those who are His servants; often leading to the belief that the more prosperous a person or a family, the more the blessings of God have rested upon them. It also leads to the prosperity theology quite common in "feeling" Christianity today.

**Pentecostalism** - A religious form where dominant emphasis is upon feeling and emotional response. It is evidenced by upbeat services with upbeat music and much physical activity. The emphasis is frequently on the miraculous, such as physical healings and outward manifestations such as speaking in unknown tongues. Entertainment dominates the services.

**Clericalism** - A concept of a church organization where decision-making and power reside firmly in the hands of the clergy. In its ultimate form, the laity become the servile responders to the dictates of the ministry.

**Futurism** - A concept of biblical prophecy, devised by the Jesuits, in which, rather than recognizing the Roman Catholic Church as the historical antichrist of prophecy, the antichrist is held to be a satanically controlled being who appears at the end of time, reigns in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem for seven years, and mercilessly persecutes the post-rapture Christians and the Jews.

**Institutionalism** - A common religious development, especially after an extended period of development within a church in which the upholding and the support of the institution are placed ahead of truth and righteousness. Thus the major energies and resources are directed toward the upholding of

these institutions almost at any cost. Usually vital ministry is greatly diminished.

**Separationism** - A belief that the church is so corrupt that God can no longer work through it. Therefore members must withdraw their membership, either to worship in small groups or to set up a new organization.

**Paternalism** - The concept that the state has a responsibility to support the church, especially in its financial needs. This point of view is often seen in such areas as state aid for Christian schools and other institutions. It leads the church more and more to come under the control of the State.

**Imperfectionism** - The concept that God either does not have the power, or chooses not to exercise the power, to keep faithful surrendered Christians from falling into sin. Thus victorious Christian living is irrelevant to salvation and impossible in this world.

**Criticism** - The action of men and women who attempt to destroy the influence of those who seek to follow God's leading in truth and righteousness. Destructive comments, which are born of rancor, do not reflect a genuine love for God, His truth or His church.

**Feminism** - The concept that God has chosen women as well as men to be elders and pastors within the Christian church.

**Universalism** - The concept that God does not destroy, which in its ultimacy leads to the view that all fallen beings, including Lucifer himself, will be saved for eternity.

**Libertarianism** - A concept that God is too loving and kind to discipline the sinful acts of man, thus opening the floodgate to every kind of evil practice to be retained in the church without appropriate church discipline.



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